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Monumental villas and villa monuments*

John Bodel

According to a story told in early imperial times about Scipio Africanus and the coastal estate at Liternum to which he withdrew, embittered and disillusioned, in his old age, Scipio one day spied a group of pirate chiefs approaching the villa and began deploying his household staff along the roof to ward off an attack. When the pirates saw the reception awaiting them, they put down their arms and sent word that they had come not as enemies but as admirers, whereupon Scipio ordered the gates to be unbarred and the visitors to be admitted. Before entering the villa, so the story goes, the pirates worshipped at the doorposts as if at an altar or sacred shrine; then, after grasping and repeatedly kissing Scipio's hand, they laid gifts of the sort generally consecrated to the gods before his vestibule and departed, happy to have seen the divine man.¹

The tale belongs to a store of legendary material built up around the elder Scipio, and we need not believe that anything of the sort ever happened (cf. Walbank 1967). For our purposes, the historicity of the story is of little importance. What matters is that such an anecdote attached to the man who emerges as the first prominent Roman known to have possessed a country villa (D'Arms 1970: 1) and the first known to have established a residence in the immediate suburbs of Rome (Coarelli 1981: 183, 187). So great was Scipio's majesty that his seaside villa was treated like a temple by those who might have been expected to view it as nothing but booty. The house is regarded as an extension of the man, a tangible symbol of his accomplishments, and thus a suitable object of veneration. In the time of Nero a freedman, Vetulenus Aegialus, won public esteem by cultivating Scipio's estate, which was located in a notoriously swampy and unproductive region, and the younger Seneca made a pilgrimage to the site, where he worshipped at a monument believed to be the general's tomb.² The well-known letter in which Seneca compares the austerity and sturdy functionalism of Scipio's dwelling with the indulgent fancies of contemporary villa architecture (*Ep.* 86) reminds us that for Romans of the educated and propertied classes a man's country house, like his manner of speech, was a reflection of his character: *qualis villa, talis vita*, as Seneca might have put it.³

* This paper, like those of Purcell (1995) and Dunbabin (1996), was originally presented in April 1990 at the First Williams Symposium (on the Roman villa) at the University of Pennsylvania and, like them, was meant to be published in the proceedings of that gathering. Much has been written on the topic of the symposium since then, and I have not been able to take account systematically of even the best of it, but I have tried to mention important new evidence, where relevant, and, where possible, to add updated bibliographical references. Among many friends who provided helpful comments at the symposium and on a subsequent written version of the manuscript, I must thank in particular Bettina Bergmann, Andrea Carandini, Kathleen Coleman, Nicholas Horsfall, Giuseppe Pucci, Richard Saller, and Susan Treggiari.

1 Val. Max. 2.10.2: qui (sc. praedones) postes ianuae tamquam aliquam religiosissimam aram sanctumque templum venerati cupidine Scipionis dexteram adprehenderunt ac diu osculati positos ante vestibulum donis, quae deorum immortalium numini consecrari solent, laeti, quod Scipionem vidisse contigisset, ad flarest (naves Torrenius : rates Gertz : classes Kempf) reverterunt.

2 Vetulenus: Pliny, *NH* 14.49; for the date, cf. Sen., *Ep.* 86.14 with Hanslik 1958. The marshes and sand dunes of Liternum were infamous: see Livy 22.16.4, Ovid, *Met.* 15.714, Stat., *Silv.* 4.3.66, Sil. Ital. 6.653-54, 8.530-31, Plut., *Fab. Max.* 6, and Frederiksen 1984: 18-19. Seneca: Sen., *Ep.* 86.1, in ipsa Scipionis Africani villa iacens haec tibi scribo, adoratis manibus eius et tara / arca, quam sepulchrum esse tanti viri suspicor. Modern editors print *ara* (altar), but *arca* (sarcophagus), attested in a manuscript of the 9th c., better accords with the burial practices of the Cornelii Scipiones: cf. Coarelli 1972: 74 n. 94.

3 Cf. Sen., *Ep.* 114.1: talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita. The notion was, as Seneca says, proverbial: cf. Otto 1890: 257 s.v. "oratio."

The significance of Roman houses as status symbols and cultural icons has been well studied in recent years.⁴ This paper sets out to explore a distinct, though related, phenomenon: the ways in which villas served to commemorate the men who built or owned them. Implicit in the stories told about Scipio's villa at Liternum is the perception that the physical structure served as a memorial to the man who had lived there. That is the sense in which I employ the term "monumental" in my title; it is not size or an imposing appearance that are relevant here but rather the phenomenon of commemoration.

The peculiar fascination exercised upon the human imagination by the domestic setting in which a great man passed his days requires no demonstration, and many societies can furnish relevant parallels to the respectful attention paid by the Romans to such noted landmarks as the so-called Hut of Romulus on the Palatine.⁵ It is my contention, however, that Roman villa culture grew up in an historical environment that especially fostered the association of country houses with personal commemoration and that shaped the development of the concept of the villa as a monument in distinctive ways. In addition to functioning as memorials themselves, Roman villas and country estates traditionally provided a setting for other, more conventional, types of monument — honorific statues, familial portrait busts, above all, tombs. The historian Livy is not known for his devotion to research, but he nonetheless felt compelled to inspect the site of Scipio's villa personally in order to verify the conflicting reports of his sources concerning the place of the general's death and burial. Rival claims had been advanced for Rome and Liternum, and Livy, having earlier reported that Scipio on his deathbed left instructions to be buried at his home in exile, undertook to confirm that a tomb and statue, though badly damaged by weather, were indeed to be found on Scipio's Campanian estate.⁶ In choosing to be laid to rest at his country seat Scipio was not alone. A law of the Twelve Tables prohibited burial or cremation within the city; another limited expenditure on funerals (Cic., *Leg.* 2.58). Both were designed to curb the aristocratic competition in public display that had grown up in the new urban center after 600 B.C. (Cornell 1995: 105-8), and we may reasonably suppose that from an early period Romans who owned land in the country regularly buried family members on their rural properties (cf. Livy 6.36.11). Certainly by the 2nd c. B.C., when the first aristocratic owners of country estates begin to surface in our literary sources, monumental tombs erected on villa sites had become a familiar feature of the suburban landscape (Purcell 1987a: 30-32).⁷ So they remained down to the time of the plague under Marcus Aurelius, when, in an effort to limit contagion, the emperor forbade anyone to build a tomb at his country villa, a regulation that remained in effect at least down to the 4th c. (SHA, *Marc.* 13.3-6).

4 See, e.g., Zanker 1979; Saller 1984a, esp. 349-55; Wiseman 1987a; Wallace-Hadrill 1988, esp. 44-47; also now Clarke 1991: 1-29, Edwards 1993: 150-60; Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 4-8, 143-74; and Purcell 1995.

5 On the Hut of Romulus, see Balland 1986. Pfister 1909-12: 347-56 assembles relevant parallels (mostly Greek) from the ancient world.

6 Livy 38.56.3-4: *alii Romae, alii Literni et mortuum et sepultum. utrobique monumenta ostenduntur et statuae; nam et Literni monumentum monumentoque statua superimposita fuit, quam tempestate deiectam nuper vidimus ipsi, et Romae extra portam Capenam in Scipionum monumento tres statuae sunt, quarum duae P. et L. Scipionum dicuntur esse, tertia poetae Q. Ennii.* Cf. also Strabo 5.4.4 and, with Livy 38.53.8, Val. Max. 5.3.2b. For the tomb of the Scipios, see Coarelli 1972 (esp. pp. 70-78 [= 1996: 201-17; cf. 516] on the monument at Liternum) and Flower 1996: 160-80.

7 If, as is likely, the tomb of the Scipios outside the Porta Capena belonged to such a suburban estate (Shatzman 1975: 246), the beginnings of Roman villa culture can be pushed back to the early years of the 3rd c. B.C. The collocation of tomb and villa at a suburban property of the Scipios would in any case help to explain the confusion in Livy's day about the final resting-place of Africanus. To this extent, at least, and in contrast to the situation in ancient Attica, Fustel de Coulanges was right to link ancestral tombs with the private ownership of landed property (1980: 56-58; cf. xv-xix; Humphreys 1980 [= 1993: 77-134]).

In time not only tombs but other types of personal monument came to be associated with the villa. Some of these grew out of the decorative programs of town houses; others seem to have flowered spontaneously at country residences, where the social constraints that inhibited self-expression in the city were relaxed somewhat and greater allowance was granted to innovative forms of display. The aesthetic and cultural considerations that shaped the decorative schemes of Roman country houses were various and complex, and it is by no means easy to distinguish the commemorative value of different sorts of villa monument from the ornamental or status-enhancing functions that many of them also served (cf. Neudecker 1988: 8-30, 74-84; Bartman 1991; Leen 1991). In the same way that utility and amenity merged seamlessly in the villa landscape (Purcell 1995), so the goals of commemoration and self-advertisement overlapped and coincided in villa architecture and ornamentation. In what follows I shall try to steer clear of some difficulties by mapping only the broad outlines of the Roman conception of the villa as a monument and by sketching in some of the most conspicuous features of the terrain. Whatever general picture emerges must inevitably come at the expense of the sort of nuanced depiction the complexity of the phenomenon deserves. But if the concept I hope to establish was as fundamental to the Roman way of thinking about their country houses as I believe it to have been, then a preliminary survey of the various themes that require further exploration may not be out of place.

1. Bringing down the house

Perhaps the most striking indication that Romans of the late Republic and early Empire recognized that a man's residence might perpetuate his memory derives, paradoxically, from the Roman practice of what the Greeks called *κατασκαφή δόμων* — the wholesale demolition of a man's house. In the classical Greek world the punitive razing to the ground of a private residence was regularly accompanied by other extraordinary penalties designed to eradicate the owner and his immediate family from the community: property was confiscated, normal burial rites were denied, and in egregious instances the bones of the condemned man's ancestors were exhumed and dispersed (Connor 1985). Such punishments were not visited upon ordinary criminals but were reserved for villains of the worst sort: murderers, traitors, and tyrants.

In the Roman world the practice evolved somewhat different connotations. Originally the wholesale destruction of a man's house was associated with a charge of aiming at kingship, and by Cicero's day tradition had settled on a canonical trio of names — Sp. Maelius, Sp. Cassius, and Manlius Capitolinus — to evoke both the folly of regal ambition and the people's traditional manifestation of hostility to it.⁸ To the same legendary period belongs the story of P. Valerius Poplicola, elected with L. Brutus to the first consulship, who is said to have torn down his imposing house on the Velian summit when told that the people viewed its eminence as a sign he aimed at a throne.⁹ Tradition attached a different charge — that of treason — to M. Vitruvius Vaccus, who led the Privernates in revolt against the Romans in 330 B.C. and whose house on the Palatine was subsequently razed (Cic., *Dom.* 101; Livy 8.19.4, 20.8); and treasonable activity was alleged in later Republican times in order to justify the demolition of the houses of M. Fulvius Flaccus, the partisan of C. Gracchus put to death in 121 B.C. (Cic., *Dom.*

⁸ Cic., *Dom.* 101; *Phil.* 2.87, 114; Val. Max. 6.3.1a-c. For Maelius see also Cic., *Div.* 2.39; Varro, *Ling.* 5.157; Livy 4.16.1; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 12.4; *De Vir. Ill.* 17.5. Cassius: Livy 2.41.11; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 8.79. Manlius: Livy 6.20.13, 7.28.5; Ovid, *Fast.* 6.185; Plut., *Cam.* 36; *De Vir. Ill.* 24. Further Panitschek 1989.

⁹ Livy 2.7.6-12; Cic., *Rep.* 2.53; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 5.19.1-2; Val. Max. 4.1.1; Plut., *Publ.* 10.2-6; *De Vir. Ill.* 15.1-3; Ascon., *In Pison.* 13 Cl. In return the people are said to have built him a house on public property, as they reportedly did also for Publius's brother Marcus on the Palatine: Cic., *Har.* 16; Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 5.39.4; Pliny, *NH* 36.112; Plut., *Publ.* 20.2; Ascon., *In Pison.* 13 Cl. Both stories sound like the fabrications of Valerius Antias: Coarelli 1983a: 79-82; Münzer 1891: 14-16, 19-20.

102, 114; Val. Max. 6.3.1c), and of L. Saturninus, murdered in 100 B.C. (Val. Max. 6.3.1c; Oros. 5.17.8-10; cf. Badian 1984, esp. 111-12).

In all these instances, as also in the cases of κατασκαφή δόμων in the Greek world, the primary aim was to eradicate the guilty party from the community. An important difference in motivation, however, distinguishes Greek from Roman practice. Whereas in the Greek world the levelling to the ground of a man's house was regularly commemorated in public decrees and other monuments, so that the memory of the crime — and its punishment — would stand as an *exemplum* for later generations,¹⁰ the intention in Roman contexts, at least by the late Republic, appears to have been exactly the opposite: when the Romans tore down a man's house, their aim was to erase any memory of his existence. In this respect Roman behavior accorded with a view expressed by Cicero in his *Laws* (2.28), when he called for the abolition of all temples dedicated in the names of vices and malicious influences, on the grounds that only the virtues were worthy of commemoration.

Occasionally the location of a villain's house, and hence also the memory of his crime, was preserved by a toponym. So Varro explained the name "Aequimelum" as arising from the levelling to the ground (*aequare solo*) of the house of Sp. Maelius (*Ling.* 5.157).¹¹ So too in his day the "Meadows of Vaccus" (*prata Vacci*) perpetuated the memory of Vitruvius's treachery (*Cic., Dom.* 101, *Livy* 8.19.4). A spurious story invented to explain the toponym "Argiletum" invoked the name of one Cassius Argillus, a Roman senator whose house was allegedly destroyed because he had recommended peace with Hannibal after Cannae (*Serv. Auct. ad Aen.* 8.345).¹² It is worth remarking, however, that no new structures were erected on these plots; instead they were left open so that memory of the crime should be associated with nothing but a vacant area.¹³ In most cases the site of a demolished house was converted to a religious or public use, so that it could never thereafter be used for a private residence (Mommsen, *Staatsr.* III, 1189). By the middle of the 3rd c. B.C. a temple of Tellus stood on the site of the house of Sp. Cassius, and the worship of Tellus on the spot probably went back to an even earlier period.¹⁴ According to one popular tradition the site of Manlius's house was occupied by the Temple of Juno Moneta, which was dedicated on the *arx* in 344 B.C. Cicero apparently knew a different

10 A Locrian law inscribed on a bronze plaque in the late 6th c. B.C. seems to provide for the demolition of the house of anyone who proposes a reapportionment of land, 'just as under the law concerning homicide' (κατὰ τὸν ἀνδροφονικὸν τετθόν: Meiggs-Lewis 13). The Athenians recorded on a bronze stele set on the Acropolis their decision to raze the houses of supporters of King Cleomenes of Sparta (*Schol. ad Ar. Lys.* 273) and commemorated their punishment of Phrynichus in 411/10 on a bronze stele (*Craterus, FGrH* 342 F 17). In a decree of the same year they provided for the setting up in Athens of *horoi* with the inscription 'of Archeptolemus and Antiphon the traitors' (*Craterus, FGrH* 342 F 5). On all this see Connor 1985: 80-84, esp. 84 n.13.

11 Cf. *Dion. Hal., Ant. Rom.* 12.4.6, *De Vir. Ill.* 17. For *Cic., Dom.* 101 and Val. Max. 6.3.1 the name signified that the razing of Maelius's house was deemed just (*aequum*).

12 Other places in Rome with suggestive names likewise attracted edifying stories of exemplary punishments (or crimes): see, e.g., Richardson 1992: 377-78 on the *Tarpeia rupes*; Coarelli 1983a: 111-17 on the *tigillum Sororium*; Coarelli 1988: 409-11 on the *vicus Sceleratus* and the *porta Scelerata*.

13 Cf. *Livy* 4.16.1: domum (sc. Sp. Maelii) deinde, ut monumento area esset oppressae nefariae spei, dirui extemplo iussit (sc. Cincinnatus). In Cicero's day the place served as a market for sacrificial sheep: *Cic., Div.* 2.39 with Pease 1920-23 *ad loc.* *Prata Vacci*: *Cic., Dom.* 101: in Vacci pratis domus fuit M. Vacci, quae publicata est et eversa ut illius facinus memoria et nomine loci notaretur.

14 Cf. *Cic., Dom.* 101 and *Livy* 2.41.11 with Platner-Ashby 1929: 511. Evidently, the site of Cassius's house remained vacant, except for the temple to Tellus, down to Augustan times: *Dion. Hal., Ant. Rom.* 8.79.3. Val. Max. 6.3.1b points to the obvious moral: itaque quod prius domicilium inpotentis viri fuerat nunc religiosae severitatis monumentum est. Proceeds from the sale of the confiscated property of M. Vaccus and Sp. Cassius were dedicated in the temples of Semo Sancus (*Livy* 8.20.8) and, perhaps, Ceres (*Dion. Hal., Ant. Rom.* 8.79.3; *Livy* 2.41.10 with Ogilvie 1965 *ad loc.*).

version that placed it on the saddle that divided the *arx* from the Capitolium proper, in the area occupied by the famous pair of sacred groves. Whence the confusion arose we cannot say — the discrepancy is but one twisted strand in a tangled web of history, myth, and familial propaganda that enshrouds the story of Manlius and the Capitoline (Horsfall 1987). For our purposes it is enough that in late Republican times the site of Manlius's house was invariably associated with a *locus sacer*.¹⁵ Concerning the subsequent history of the lot once occupied by the house of M. Flaccus there has never been any doubt: Q. Lutatius Catulus diverted some of the spoils of his victory over the Cimbri to finance the construction there of a portico in his name, 'so that,' in Cicero's words, 'all memory of him who had devised ruinous plans for the Republic should be wholly removed from the eyes and minds of men.'¹⁶

Eradicating the memory of a hated enemy was certainly the intention of P. Clodius in 58 B.C. when he demolished Cicero's house on the Palatine and constructed a shrine of Liberty on the site. In the speeches delivered before the pontiffs and the senate upon his triumphant return from exile the following year and in a private letter to Atticus written during the same period, Cicero makes it clear that Clodius's aim was to inflict upon him a peculiarly Roman form of the punishment we call *damnatio memoriae* (Cic., *Dom.* 62; *Red. Sen.* 18; *Att.* 4.2.5, 7).¹⁷ A similar motivation underlay the decision of the Roman senate, in a decree of A.D. 20 condemning Cn. Piso for the death of Germanicus, to instruct the curators in charge of public places to oversee the demolition of 'what Cn. Piso had built above the Porta Fontinalis for the purpose of joining his private houses'.¹⁸ In Cicero's case, not only his town house but also his villas at Tusculum and Formiae were confiscated and at least partially destroyed (Cic., *Dom.* 62; *Att.* 4.2.5, 7). This extension of violence to the extra-urban properties of a fallen figure reflects the increasing symbolic importance that rural estates had come to acquire with the rise of fashionable *villeggiatura* during the last period of the Republic, and it marks an important stage in the developing Roman perception of country houses as personal monuments. With the advent of empire the traditional excuses for demolishing an enemy's house no longer applied, since aiming at kingship and treason against the state ceased to be distinguishable offenses, and *lèse majesté* provoked different forms of retaliation. It was left to the resourcefulness of the first Princesps to devise a new pretext to justify the act.

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- 15 Juno Moneta: Livy 6.20.13, 7.28.5; Plut., *Cam.* 36.9; Val. Max. 6.3.1a; Ovid, *Fasti* 6.183-86. *Duo luci*: Cic., *Dom.* 101 with Wiseman 1979: 39-40. Giannelli 1982: 7-8 argues that the two topographical indications can be reconciled, but it seems more likely that Cicero was following a variant tradition. According to Livy 6.20.13-14, the people subsequently decreed that no patrician should thereafter be permitted to live on the Capitoline (cf. Val. Max. 6.3.1a) and the Manlian *gens* forbade any future member of the family to bear the *praenomen* Marcus (at *De Vir. Ill.* 24 the prohibition is said to have pertained to the *cognomen* Capitolinus). Livy's final comment on these posthumous measures (6.20.14) underscores their primary purpose of eradicating the memory of the man: *hunc exitum habuit vir, nisi in libera civitate natus esset, memorabilis*: see further Jaeger 1993.
- 16 Cic., *Dom.* 114: ... *ut eius qui perniciose rei publicae consilia cepisset omnis memoria funditus ex oculis hominum ac mentibus tolleretur*. Cf. Cic., *Dom.* 102; Val. Max. 6.3.1c. Following the expulsion of Dionysius II from Syracuse in 343/2 B.C., all the tyrants' works — including, according to Plutarch (*Tim.* 22.2), their houses and tombs — were destroyed, 'so that the many traces of servitude should in no way survive' (*ut quam minime multa vestigia servitutis manerent*): Nep., *Tim.* 3.3.
- 17 Cf. Cic., *Dom.* 116, App., *BC* 2.15, Vell. Pat. 2.14, 45, Plut., *Cic.* 33, Cass. Dio 38.17.6; further Nisbet 1939: 206-12 and, for the location of the site (near the Arch of Titus), Carandini 1988: 360-73. For the imputation that Cicero had behaved like a tyrant, see Allen 1944; Edwards 1993: 155-57.
- 18 *s.c. de Cn. Pisone patre* (Eck-Caballos-Fernández 1996) 105-8: *item placere uti Cn. Piso pater supra portam Fontinalem quae inaedificasset iungendarum domum privatarum causa, ea curatores locorum publicorum iudicandorum tollenda dimolienda curarent*. Piso's house prominently overlooked the Forum (Tac., *Ann.* 3.9.3) from the shoulder of the Capitoline near the Clivus Argentarius, opposite the equally conspicuous site of Cicero's (then Statilius Sisenna's) house on the Clivus Victoriae (Vell. 2.14.3; Cic., *Dom.* 100); see further Eck-Caballos-Fernández 1996: 207-11 and Woodman-Martin 1996: 127.

In 15 B.C. Augustus inherited the palatial urban residence of his notorious acquaintance and one-time friend and agent, Vedius Pollio. According to Cassius Dio, Vedius left instructions that a monument of great beauty was to be erected for the public in his name. The emperor did not comply. Instead he razed the house to the ground and in good Republican fashion built on the site a public portico (54.23.5-6), which his wife Livia and son-in-law Tiberius dedicated in her name eight years later (55.8.2).¹⁹ Ovid reports what must have been the official version of events: the house was demolished, he says, not because of a charge of treason, but because its opulence was regarded as harmful (*Fasti* 6.643-44). To judge from Ovid's account (*Fasti* 6.639-42), the building was indeed exceptionally large and, we may suppose, handsomely appointed. But Augustus was not so averse to luxury that he declined to enter upon his bequest from the same Pollio of the sumptuous villa called Pausilypon on the coast southwest of Naples, which remained an imperial property at least down to the time of Hadrian (Cass. Dio 54.23.5; Pliny, *NH* 9.167; D'Arms 1970: 76-77, 111-12, 229-30). Contemporary observers may well have suspected an ulterior motive, and to a later historian the truth seemed obvious: Dio states plainly that Augustus destroyed Vedius's house at Rome 'so that Pollio would have no monument in the city.'²⁰

The same can be said of the emperor's intentions in demolishing the country house of his granddaughter Julia some 20 years later. Suetonius reports the event in the context of discussing Augustus's preferences in domestic architecture, where he alleges the emperor's distaste for opulence (*Aug.* 72.3), but Syme (1986: 118, 120) was surely right to associate the razing of Julia's villa with her relegation to the island of Trimerus in A.D. 8 on charges of adultery. The emperor's wrath on that occasion manifested itself in a series of measures designed to eradicate this capricious shoot from the Julian family tree: Augustus ordered the infant born to Julia in exile to be exposed, forbade that her remains be deposited in his mausoleum, and openly wished that he had remained childless (Suet., *Aug.* 65.4, 101.3).²¹ When seen in this context, the destruction of Julia's villa emerges as part of a systematic programme of *damnatio memoriae* similar to that inflicted upon Cicero some years earlier. The emperor's well-advertized abhorrence from luxury provided a convenient pretext and no doubt contributed to the satisfaction he derived from the gesture, but his primary motivation in razing Julia's villa was both more personal and more direct: Julia had been disowned and her existence, insofar as was possible, was to be erased from the memory of men.

By the early years of the 1st c. A.D. the destruction of a country house had become a hostile act of unmistakable symbolic significance, as is made clear by an anecdote told about a certain Sex. Marius, reputed to be the wealthiest man of Spain, who was hurled from the Tarpeian rock in A.D. 33 on an accusation of incestuous relations with his daughter (Cass. Dio 58.22.2-4). Once, when Marius was quarrelling with a neighbor (we are not told where), he invited the man to be his guest for two days, on the first of which he had the man's villa levelled to the ground and on the second had it rebuilt on a far more lavish scale. 'This shows you,' Marius is reported to have advised his neighbor, 'that I have both the knowledge and the ability to requite both enmity and kindness.'²² About Marius's power neither we nor the unfortunate

19 Remains of the *Porticus Liviae*, and possibly also of the house of Pollio, have been uncovered between the Via in Selci and the Via delle Sette Sale on the Oppian: Panella 1987. For Livia's shrine to Concordia on the site, see Flory 1984; Gros-Sauron 1988: 61-64. For Vedius Pollio and Augustus, Syme 1961: 23-30 [= 1979: 2. 518-29], esp. 29 [527].

20 Cass. Dio 54.23.6: ὁ οὖν Αὐγούστος τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ ἐς ἔδαφος προφάσει τῆς ἐκείνου κατασκευῆς, ὅπως μὴδὲν μνημόσυνον ἐν τῇ πόλει ἔχῃ, καταβαλὼν περίστροφον ᾠκοδομήσατο.

21 Julia's exclusion from the emperor's tomb presupposes her formal disinherison (Linderski 1988: 190-92), a drastic form of renunciation rarely undertaken by Roman testators: Champlin 1991: 14-15, 107.

22 Cass. Dio 58.22.2-3: οὕτω καὶ ἀμύνεσθαί τινα καὶ οἶδα καὶ δύναμαι. Cf. Tac., *Ann.* 6.19.1, 4.36.1 with Syme 1983a: 6 [= 1988: 4.227]; further, *PIR*² M 295.

neighbor can be left with any doubt. Of greater interest is the first part of Marius's assertion — that he knew how to use it. By focusing his resources on his neighbor's villa, Marius struck at the heart of the man's existence — not only his material wealth and social standing but also the integrity of his household, past, present and future, for a wealth of evidence shows that Romans viewed their homes as potent symbols of family continuity.

In prominent houses portrait masks (*imagines*) of distinguished ancestors were displayed in individual cupboards around the atrium; family trees consisting of painted portraits connected by lines adorned the walls; and the official careers of members of the clan were duly recorded in household archives.²³ Even in more modest dwellings the religious aura invested in the house by the nature of Roman domestic worship encouraged an association between the sanctity of the home and the continuity of the family line. As a result the physical structure itself could be evoked metonymically by reference to the *lares familiares*, guardian spirits of the household, or the *di penates*, tutelary divinities of the household food supply — both figures regularly associated in popular belief with the spirits of deceased ancestors. The punitive demolition of a Roman house could thus be characterized as the scattering of the *di penates* (Val. Max. 6.3.1c), or the abandonment of a condemned dwelling as the loss of *lar* and *penates* (Livy 1.29.4). In a very real sense, the destruction of a man's home constituted a violent rupture in family continuity, signifying a break with the past and rendering prospects for the future of the line uncertain.²⁴

2. 'This is the house that Jack built ...'

The honorific display of *imagines* and family genealogies in the *atria* of Roman homes has generally been regarded as an urban phenomenon — naturally, since the practice has rightly been associated with the semi-public character of a prominent Roman's town-house, where regular rituals such as the morning *salutatio* provided a formal mechanism for presenting a favorable image to the world (Flower 1996: 185-222). Pride in the family residence extended well beyond the confines of the city, however, and manifested itself in the country in various ways. For an indication of the importance attached to rural (as opposed to urban) houses as symbols of family continuity we need look no further than to our most familiar literary authorities, many of whom evince a strong emotional attachment to their ancestral properties. None of the major Roman authors whose works have survived is known to have been born at the capital; of those whose birthplace is securely attested, most grew up on rural properties in Italy or elsewhere in the western provinces (Watts 1971). When a Cicero or a Horace or a Pliny professes devotion to his paternal home, he is generally thinking of the countryside rather than the city, of a villa rather than a townhouse (cf. Bonjour 1975: 162-218). The point is worth emphasizing, since the testimony of these same authors has been effectively marshalled to show that they exhibited a piety toward inherited familial real estate that is not evidenced in their behavior toward other urban or rural properties (Treggiari 1979: 61-73, discussing, *inter alia*, Cic., *Leg.* 2.1-6; Hor., *Epist.* 1.14.1-3, 39; Pliny, *Ep.* 2.15.2). To what extent our surviving literary sources are representative of other Roman property owners in this respect is impossible to say, but we have no reason to suspect that their attitudes were unusual.

Whether or not sentiment regularly translated into action — that is, whether or not Roman property owners tried especially to keep ancestral homes within the family — is considerably less certain. Pliny the Younger professed an unwillingness to part with real estate left to him

23 The *locus classicus* is Pliny, *NH* 35.6-7; cf. also Polyb. 6.53.4-10; Sall., *Jug.* 4.5-6; Val. Max. 5.8.3; Sen., *Ep.* 44.1, 5; Ben. 3.28.2. On all aspects of the *imagines*, see now Flower 1996.

24 See, e.g., Bonjour 1975: 50-51 and Dubourdieu 1989: 51-54, 98-106; further on the pragmatics of Roman domestic worship, Orr 1978 and, for its social implications, briefly, Saller 1984a: 350-51. For *domus* as a symbol of family unity, see Saller 1994: 88-95.

by his mother and father (*Ep.* 7.11.5), but continuity in familial ownership of particular houses — urban, suburban, or rural — is notoriously difficult to trace at any period.

D'Arms (1970) registers only one certain (172-73, Mark Antony) and one possible (224-25, P. Servilius Vatia) case of a Campanian villa known to have belonged to the same family for more than a generation. Treggiari (1973: 246-47) adduces a possible third: the Lamiae, whose villa at Formiae had perhaps been the family seat for generations. The Valerii Catulli of Verona may have owned the sprawling villa at Sirmione from the 1st c. B.C. to the 3rd c. A.D. (Wiseman 1987: 349-70, esp. 367-69, surveying other possibilities), and we happen to hear of several rural estates in late Roman Gaul passed on by agnatic descent through several generations (e.g., Sid. Apoll., *Carm.* 22.142-144; Auson., *Hered.* 1.1-3), but whether this testimony reflects a regional or a chronological difference in landholding patterns, or merely a change in literary convention, is difficult to say. The private rural estates that flowed with increasing regularity into the patrimony of the emperors throughout the 1st and 2nd c. frequently retained the names of their former owners down to mediaeval times and beyond, but the careful tracing of these familial properties back through the centuries (microtoponomastics?) has thus far been realized in only a few striking instances: see Champlin 1993.

Evidence of continuity in familial ownership of urban houses is surprisingly scarce, despite the far greater quantity of random information that has survived (cf., e.g., Tamm 1963: 44-45 on the Palatine residences of the late Republican Hortensii and Lutatii Catuli). The catalogues of "Domus" and "Horti" by Platner-Ashby (1929: 154-98), Richardson (1992: 112-40, 195-204), and various authors in Steinby 1995 (22-217) yield a meager harvest. Shatzman (1975: 104-5) records several instances of rural and urban properties transmitted from one generation to the next by members of the senatorial class, but continuity in familial ownership of particular residences can seldom be demonstrated. Far more striking is the rapidity with which fashionable houses in Rome and Campania changed hands during the late Republic and early Empire (Tamm 1963: 28-33; Rawson 1976, esp. 86). With the exception of familial properties held off the market, the brisk trade in villas was driven by the newly rich: as Cicero remarks of the Tusculan estate of L. Cornelius Balbus, '... no clan owns rural estates; by purchase they often come into the possession of strangers, often to men of the lowest rank' (*Balb.* 56: *praediorum nullam esse gentem, emptioibus ea solere saepe ad alienos homines, saepe ad infimos ... pervenire*).

The scarcity of references in our legal sources to family settlements has been taken to suggest that "the Roman settlor did not aim to preserve his landed property and with it to secure the family status" (Johnston 1988b: 107), but various types of inscriptional evidence seem to point to the opposite conclusion.

Roman brickstamps suggest that land containing productive clay beds changed hands more often by inheritance from father to daughter than by any other means (Setälä 1977: 230-41) — a phenomenon which, if typical of rural properties in general, may explain why continuity in familial ownership of villa estates has not left more of a trace in the prosopographical record (cf. Saller 1984b: 202-3). From the surprisingly small number of named lots recorded in the Trajanic alimentary table from Ligures Baebiani (*CIL* 9.1455) owned by proprietors bearing the same *gentilicia* as their properties, Champlin (1981: 245-51) plausibly concludes that local landowners were reluctant to pledge their ancestral estates to the imperial scheme. That view is consistent with the conclusions reached by Duncan-Jones (1990: 141), who observes a "dominant trend" in the landholding patterns attested in six imperial land registers toward an accumulation of territory in the hands of the rich, with divided inheritance constituting a contrary but much weaker tendency. As for the practice (where known) of individual Roman testators, "the huge majority ... with surviving children leave all or some of them as heirs or major legatees" (Champlin 1989: 213).

When it comes to identifying 'normal' patterns of behavior, we must admit that we lack the knowledge to decide the question. Under the circumstances, any attempt to estimate the extent to which the preservation of ancestral homes may have been motivated by a desire to perpetuate the memory of the founder and his line — in other words, to measure the degree to which propertied Romans considered inherited homes, particularly villas, as family monuments — must inevitably remain tentative. A brief overview of the various types of evidence bearing upon the question may nonetheless help to illuminate some of the ways in which villas came to be regarded as suitable vehicles of commemoration.

As we have seen in the case of Scipio Africanus, when the traditional Roman respect for familial homesteads combined with the cultic adoration of a great man, the result was an almost mystical reverence for the property. In the time of Hadrian visitors to the ancestral suburban estate near Velitrae where the emperor Augustus had been reared were shown a nursery that was more like a pantry, which no one dared enter without first undergoing ritual purification. No doubt they were told the story of a recent owner of the property who challenged the taboo by going to bed in the room and who was later found half-dead before the door, having been ejected in the middle of the night by a 'sudden mysterious force' (*subita vi et incerta*, Suet., *Aug.* 6). Not surprisingly, miraculous stories concerning the emperor's infancy and childhood attached to the site (Suet., *Aug.* 94.6-7). Whether any of these was current in Augustus's day and, if so, whether he did anything to foster them is uncertain, but it is suggestive that Vespasian, who modelled his principate after that of Augustus in so many ways, exhibited an uncommon fondness for his paternal grandmother's villa at Cosa, where he had been reared, visiting it regularly as an adult and preserving its appointments unchanged, lest he miss anything fondly recalled from his youth (Suet., *Vesp.* 2.1). About Vespasian too auspicious portents were reported from the suburban estate of the Flavii on the day of his birth (Suet., *Vesp.* 5.2).

Tamm (1963: 49) speculates that Augustus himself may have set aside the ostentatiously modest part of his Palatine house described by Suetonius (*Aug.* 72.1, 73.1) as a sort of museum for future generations. The shrine at the site of his birth *ad Capita Bubula* on the Palatine was built only after his death (Suet. *Aug.* 5). Toward the end of the 1st c. the emperor Domitian anticipated this form of posthumous commemoration by converting his father's house on the Quirinal, where he had been born, into the Temple of the Flavians (Suet., *Dom.* 1.1), with the intention of having the monument serve as the imperial family's mausoleum (cf. Mart. 9.34; Suet., *Dom.* 17.3). This transformation of house into tomb illustrates nicely the commemorative value that domestic residences had by this time come to acquire.

As villa-owners Augustus and Vespasian were hardly typical, but the *Reliquienkult* associated with their boyhood homes in the anecdotal biographies of Suetonius may not have been as exceptional as at first it seems. A peculiar bedroom in the so-called villa San Rocco at Francolise, in which the original mosaic floor, approximately datable to the middle of the 1st c. B.C., was carefully restored a quarter of a century later when those of the rooms surrounding it were relaid in the latest style, has been interpreted as revealing a similar reverence by an Augustan proprietor for the memory of a respected forebear who had slept there (Métraux 1985a: 140-41; 1985b: 50-52, 91). Certainty of interpretation is not to be expected in such matters, but neither can we expect under normal circumstances to find explicit testimony of the sort provided by Suetonius for the devotion shown by the first Flavian emperor toward his ancestral villa. The term "monument" does not in any case seem inappropriate to describe the status the boyhood homes of Augustus and Vespasian came to acquire in the minds of subsequent generations.

Inherited homesteads were not the only types of villas that served the purposes of commemoration. When the younger Seneca turned to the question of mortality in his *Epistulae Morales*, he introduced the topic by recalling a visit to his dilapidated suburban farmhouse (perhaps the *Nomentanum* of *Ep.* 104.1), a structure that 'had grown under his own hands' and of which the deteriorating condition now reminded him painfully of his own declining years (*Ep.* 12.1). The conceit plays upon the received notion that villas could be expected to survive their builders. Most, of course, did do so, and with the tangible evidence of physical survival came — inevitably, to the Roman mind — the prospect of furthering one's posthumous reputation.

If you built or improved a villa on a grand enough scale or in a novel fashion, you could expect to have your name associated with the structure after you were gone. This much was clear by the time of L. Lucullus, whose considerable achievements as soldier and administrator were eclipsed within his own lifetime by a reputation for gourmandizing and lavish private building on an unprecedented scale. If Plutarch's biography is to be trusted, Lucullus revelled in his reputation for extravagance and courted the enduring fame denied him for his public service

by the splendor of his private life (*Luc.* 39.1-2). The condemnation of contemporary moralists, who called him 'Xerxes in a toga,' (Plut., *Luc.* 39.3; cf. Vell. Pat. 2.33.4; Pliny, *NH* 9.170, attributing the phrase to Pompey), cannot have counted for much with a man of whose country estates it was said there was more to sweep than to plough (Pliny, *NH* 9.170), when the purpose of such extensive building was to ensure a lasting reputation with posterity.²⁵ When the emperor Tiberius died at Misenum, chroniclers noted that it was at Lucullus's villa, now an imperial property, that he gave up the ghost (Tac., *Ann.* 6.50.2; Suet., *Tib.* 73.1; cf. Phaedr. 2.5.8). Four and a half centuries later the last Roman emperor of the West, Romulus Augustulus, was confined in Campania at a site identified (whether rightly or wrongly) as *castrum Lucullanum* (Marcellinus Comes, *Chron. a.* 476 (= MGH AA xi, p. 91); Jordanes, *Romana* 344; *Getica* 46.242). Lucullus was exceptional; but the example he set, perhaps for the first time, as "eponymous" villa owner did not go unremarked by others eager to secure a lasting reputation.²⁶ The nature of our literary and inscriptional sources does not normally permit us to tell whether a villa identified by an adjectival form of a *gentilicium* or *cognomen* refers to the current or most recent owner rather than to the original founder, but a wealth of legal evidence makes it clear that the possibility of perpetuating the family name was not lost on villa owners of later periods, and from humbler walks of life.

A survey of the Roman jurists' pronouncements concerning the testamentary entailment of property reveals a peculiar imbalance: whereas only a handful of passages pertains to settlements within the related family, literally dozens record arrangements designed to keep property within the family name (Johnston 1988b: 77-97). Since the vast majority of these settlements involve real estate, particularly rural real estate, and since the terms regularly employed to describe these country properties — *fundus* and *praedium* — normally refer to land with domestic buildings attached, we are justified in finding in many of these passages evidence for Roman attitudes regarding the transmission of family villas.²⁷ It is pointless to debate whether a Roman testator was thinking primarily of his cultivated fields or the residential structures on them when he bequeathed a *fundus* or *praedium* under the condition that it not pass from his family name. In such testamentary contexts farm and farmhouse were perceived to constitute a single entity, just as in life the domestic residence was inseparably linked with the ostentatiously productive landscape that surrounded it (Purcell 1995). It is therefore noteworthy that, in disposing of these properties by testament, Roman settlers appear to have been less eager to preserve real estate within the family or to provide alimentary subsidies for their dependents than to ensure the continued association of the property with their names. For this purpose leaving an estate to one's freedmen was an easy, and in some respects preferable, alternative to bequeathing it to a natural or adoptive heir (Johnston 1988b: 96-97, 106-7).

25 For censorious remarks about the extravagance of country houses, cf., e.g., Cic., *Dom.* 124, *Sest.* 93, *Pis.* 48, *De Or.* 2.276; Sall., *Cat.* 12.3; Sen., *Ben.* 7.10.5; *Ep.* 51.11, 55.6-7, 89.19-20, 90.43; Pliny, *NH* 3.70, 18.32; Tac., *Ann.* 3.5.3 with Edwards 1993: 137-49. For Lucullus's Campanian estates, see D'Arms, 1970: 184-86 and 113, on *CIL* 10.1748, which, if Mommsen's interpretation (*CIL* 10, p.213) is correct, provides contemporary evidence for the designation of the general's estate at Bauli as *v(illa) L(ucullana)* already in the time of Tiberius.

26 Pliny, *Ep.* 5.18.1 seems to refer to a villa of Sulla's identified as such in Pliny's day, but the property is not named (Keaveney and Madden 1981: 396-97). The pseudo-Ciceronian *Invective* against Sallust taxes him with occupying, unworthily, the Tiburtine villa of Julius Caesar (19-20): villas, like town-houses, acquired from their illustrious owners reputations that had to be maintained (cf. Cic., *Balb.* 56).

27 Cf., e.g., *Dig.* 30.114.15-18; 31.67.5-7; 31.77.11, 15; 31.77.27-28; 31.78.3; 31.88.6; 32.38.1, 3, 4; 32.93.pr.; 32.94; 33.1.18.pr.; 35.1.108. The precise definitions of *praedium* and *fundus* supplied by Ulpian (*Dig.* 50.16.198) and Florentinus (*Dig.* 50.16.211; cf. Ulpian, 50.16.60.pr.) cannot be taken to apply in all legal contexts (cf. Johnston 1988b: 81 on *familia*), but literary sources confirm that the words generally referred to landed property with residential buildings attached: see *TLL* VI 1575.53-61, X 578.19-36.

A pair of early imperial epitaphs set up by husbands for their wives illustrates nicely the commemorative function such settlements might serve in preserving a family name otherwise destined to fall casualty to the onomastic conventions of the Roman patronymic system. According to a tombstone erected at Cordoba sometime in the late 1st or 2nd c. A.D., a widower handed over the suburban estate adjoining his wife's tomb to two freedmen and two freedwomen from her household, with the stipulation that none of them sell the property; instead they were to pass it down through their agnatic descendants or freedmen. This was done 'for the eternal memory' of his wife, and the clause restricting the estate to male relatives and freedmen of his wife's ex-slaves makes it clear that the principal aim was to prevent the property from being alienated from her name.²⁸ Not all wives entrusted this form of posthumous commemoration to their husbands' initiative: an epitaph of late 2nd- or 3rd-c. date set up by a Roman knight for his wife according to her instructions affirms a provision of her will that the little country-house (*praetoriolum*) and garden where her monument was erected pass, along with the monument, to her freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants, so that it never leave her household. Here too it is clear that the intent is to perpetuate the woman's noble family name.²⁹

Sometimes it is not ownership but authorship that claims recognition. An inscription of (probably) 2nd-c. date from Aquitania set up by a father and son to dedicate a *heroon* proudly proclaims that the father had built the nearby villa from the ground up.³⁰ Similar, apparently, in the association of house and *heroon* is the boast of a young equestrian *viator* of the 3rd c. that he had 'built up from the ground the *praetoriolum* associated with the heroon' of his family beside the Via Latina outside Rome.³¹ At Cirta in Numidia an early imperial resident described himself in the dedication accompanying a commemorative monument as 'a lover of the region of his suburban Azimacian villa, which he constructed from the ground up.'³² These texts attesting the pride attached to the role of *aedificator* or illustrating the desire to keep a favorite estate in the family name derive from monuments erected in the vicinity of the villas

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- 28 CIL 2.4332 = ILS 8271: D(is) M(anibus) / Antoniae Clementinae ux(ori) P. Rufius Fla<v>us / m(aritus) f(ecit) et s(ibi), v(ivus); inq(ue) memoriam perpetuam / hortos coherentes sive suburbanum tradidit /⁵ lib(ertis) libertabusq(ue) ex familia ux(oris) Marullo, Antroclo, / Helenae, Tertullinae; exceptiq(ue) ne quis eos / venderet, set per genus ipsorum possessio decurreret / vel per atnatos vel manumissos. Cf. Johnston 1988b: 99; Sherk 1988: 239 no. 180; and, for the meaning of *horti* (a suburban estate) and *suburbanum*, Champlin 1985: 98-99.
- 29 CIL 5.4057 = ILS 8230 (now in Mantua but possibly originating in Rome: cf. Mommsen in CIL 5, p.1213, s.v. "multae et comminationes sepulcrales paganae"): Cl(audius) Amazoni[c]us v(ir) e(gregius), maritus / Marciae Aurel(iae) Alexandriae c(larissimae) m(emoriae) f(eminae) / hunc titulum secundum mandatum / eiusdem Alexandriae, quae cum adviveret /⁵ testamento suo prae{ce}cepit hunc praetoriolum / cum hortulo et heroo libertis libertabus/que posterisque eorum cedi, et iussit ne quando de / familia alienetur For the wife, see Raepsaet-Charlier 1987 s.v. The sense of *praetoriolum* is uncertain. According to the OLD s.v., "a small country-house," texts such as CIL 11.1222 = ILS 1554—an epitaph of the 2nd c. A.D. found near Placentia recording that the deceased 'built up from the ground this *praetorium* with its bath' (*hoc praetorium cum balineo a solo erexit*) — suggest that the term might sometimes refer to the tomb monument itself: see below, n.31 and cf. Champlin 1991: 179-80 on the similarly ambiguous "praediolum".
- 30 CIL 13.1571 (Gabali): L. Sever(ius) Sev[e]/rus L. S(everi) N() f(ilius) o[m]/nibus honori[b]/us in civitate func/⁵tus quiq(ue) hanc v[il]/lam a solo instit[u]/it et D. (Severius) S(everus) maior filior[um] / heroum institu/erunt pro salut[e] / sua et suorum.
- 31 CIL 6.32308 = ILS 1921: L. Faenius L. fil(ius) Dona[tus dec(urialis)] decuriae viatoriaeq(uestris) co(n)s(ularis) / praetoriolum pertinens ad [her]joum / suum et Flaviae Titi fil(iae) Chr[esi]me / uxoris suae suorumque omnium /⁵ a solo exstruxit. For the date, see Purcell 1983: 153 n. 163. Faenius's epitaph was found on the same site beside the Via Latina: he died at 29 (CIL 6.1919; cf. 1920 for one of his freedmen, also a *viator consularis*).
- 32 CIL 8.7741: Memoriae. L. Sit/tius Augustalis am<a>/tor reg(ionis) suburbani sui / Azimaciani, quem a solo ae/⁵dificavit, sibi suisque fecit. / Bonis bene!

to which they refer (a phenomenon to which we shall return).³³ Similar inscriptions could be found installed in the villas themselves, so that the domestic building itself became the vehicle of commemoration.

Sojourning in a country hamlet in Aquitania sometime around the middle of the 5th c. A.D., the aristocrat Sidonius Apollinaris conceived the idea of composing a hexameter poem for his friend Pontius Leontius on the subject of Pontius's fortress estate near Bordeaux. The resulting piece is a confused agglomeration of conceits that frustrate rather than aid the reader in his efforts to understand the building; the character and purpose of one feature, however, are perfectly clear: set into the entrance of the villa was a stone with the names of the founders inscribed upon it, 'lest posterity doubt who established the residence.'³⁴ Elsewhere Sidonius informs us that it was not Leontius but an otherwise unknown ascendant, Pontius Paulinus, who constructed the bulwarks when the land was under Roman rule — sometime, that is, before the Visigoths became firmly established in the region in the early years of the 5th c.³⁵ With the villa of Leontius we thus have rare and unequivocal evidence of a familial estate handed down from one generation to the next and preserving, in a literal sense, the founder's name.

Sidonius's testimony is significant in another respect as well. In expatiating on the appointments of Leontius's castle, Sidonius enters late into a long tradition of literary descriptions of villas that first blossomed during the Flavian era.³⁶ P. Papinius Statius, for whom ecphrases were a specialty, devoted two long poems of panegyric description to the country houses of his patrons Manilius Vopiscus (*Silv.* 1.3) and Pollius Felix (*Silv.* 2.2) sometime around the middle of Domitian's reign (c.85-90) and is perhaps to be recognized as the originator of the fully-developed form. But Statius's contemporary Martial likewise found it worthwhile to flatter his patrons with laudatory epigrams in praise of their suburban mansions (e.g., 4.64, 12.57), and lesser poets in similar circumstances are sure to have followed suit. Much has been made of the differences between Statius's euphoric vision of man's technological mastery over nature and Martial's more light-hearted appreciation of modern conveniences (Pavlovskis 1973: 13-25), but we should be wary of regarding the advent of laudatory villa descriptions in Latin verse as purely a literary phenomenon resulting from the felicitous discovery of a new source of poetic inspiration. For the previous generation of Roman authors luxurious villas had been symbols of decadence (Morford 1968: 167-78): moralizing about the extravagance of the rich came easy to the slippered ease of a Seneca, a Lucan, or a Petronius. Statius and Martial wrote from a different position on the social scale. As professional poets, the topics and tone of

33 Possibly relevant in this context is an inscribed male portrait bust of Flavian date, now in the Getty Museum in Malibu (85.AA.111: unpublished), on which, beneath the name of the honorand, is the phrase *qui hanc casulam fecit*.

34 Sidon., *Carm.* 22.142-44: *et ne posteritas dubitet quis conditor extet, / fixus in introitu lapis est; hic nomina signat / auctorum*. A mosaic inscription from the House of Castorius at Cuicul seems to identify the current owners of 'this house' (*haec domus*): Thébert 1987: 398-400.

35 Sidon., *Carm.* 22.117-119: *quem [sc. montem] generis princeps Paulinus Pontius olim, / cum Latius patriae dominabitur, ambiet altis / moenibus et celsae transmittent aera tures*. Paulinus is perhaps to be identified with the father of Paulinus of Nola, a man active in the middle years of the 4th c. (so, tentatively, Jones, Martindale, and Morris 1971: 681 "Paulinus" 19; cf. 673 "Paulinus" 5); the context implies that he was at least two generations removed from Leontius. For the Goths in S. Gaul see Thompson 1956 and Bachrach 1969.

36 Antecedents are sometimes sought in Greek architectural epigrams of the Hellenistic period (Hesberg 1981), and the traditional descriptive *topos* of the *locus amoenus* no doubt contributed to the development of the form. Catullus's tribute to Sirmio (31) represents the first true Roman specimen (Wiseman 1987b: 307-70), however, and full-scale treatments do not appear before the last quarter of the 1st c. A.D. The conceit seems to have enjoyed a vogue in late antiquity: with Sidonius's letters on his villa at Avitacum (*Ep.* 2.2) and that of Consentius at Narbonne (*Ep.* 8.4) compare Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* 1.18-20, 3.12, 10.9; Ausonius, *Hered.* 1.

their verse owed as much to the tastes of their patrons as to their own artistic predilections (cf. White 1982). Martial could wax sarcastic about the sterile extravagance of luxury palaces that left no room for eating and sleeping (12.50), and for him the Domus Aurea was an abomination (*Spect.* 2); but when his livelihood was at stake, Martial sang the same tune as Statius, albeit in a different key. The addition of a new amenity to the residence of a wealthy benefactor provided an opportunity for ingratiating service that neither poet could afford to pass up, and a comparison of the complementary efforts of the author of the *Silvae* (*Silv.* 1.5) and the epigrammatist (6.42) in praise of the baths of Claudius Etruscus reveals the similarity of their social positions no less than the differences in their poetic sensibilities (White 1975: 275-79).

The primary purpose of these architectural ecphrases was to gratify a patron's ego (White 1974: 43), and for such men nothing was so gratifying as the prospect of fame and a lasting reputation (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 3.21.6). In this they differed little from patrons of an earlier age. What was new was the notion that the domestic environment in which a gentleman cultivated his leisure was itself worthy of poetic commemoration. Horace had much to say in praise of the Sabine farm bestowed upon him by Maecenas, but the appointments of the villa come in for scarcely a word (cf. *Odes* 2.18.1-8; *Serm.* 2.3.10). House descriptions did not yet in his day possess the literary cachet they would later come to acquire; besides, Horace had other means of fashioning a monument more lasting than bronze. The same cannot be said of the Younger Pliny, whose reputation with posterity was never far from his mind (Bütler 1970: 21-27). Exploring how Pliny adapted Statius's model to the peculiarly self-serving requirements of his own innovative literary form is an absorbing exercise, but the intricacies of Pliny's accounts of his Laurentine and Tuscan villas (*Ep.* 2.17; 5.6; see Bergmann 1995) should not allow us to lose sight of the fact that his main purpose in publishing a selection of his private correspondence was to place on permanent record the portrait of a cultured and accomplished gentleman (Syme 1958: 98; 1988: 5.487-88). For this a detailed description of his country residences was considered ideal; about Pliny's town house we hear not a word, except indirectly in a poem of Martial (10.19) he quotes in his letter on the poet's death (*Ep.* 3.21). The long letters on Pliny's country houses are far more than literary diversions, as is sometimes supposed (e.g., by Mansuelli 1978). They are the natural counterparts of the long letters on his participation in the important political trials of the day: both are *documenta virtutis*. As Pliny explains at the end of his description of his Tuscan estate, in the longest letter of the collection, he is especially proud of the villas he laid out himself, or those where he perfected an earlier plan (*Ep.* 5.6.41); thus it is not the letter that is great but the villa it describes (*Ep.* 5.6.44). The conceit is disingenuous: both the autobiographical letter and the personally-designed Tuscan villa were meant to perpetuate the reputation of their author. In writing about his country house Pliny bolsters both supports of his anticipated fame.

Nor was this "monumentalization" of the villa during the early Empire restricted to the literary and the epigraphic world. Already by the time of Claudius the owners of fashionable rural and suburban properties had embraced the practice, said by the Elder Pliny to have originated with a certain Studius in the Augustan era (*NH* 35.116), of depicting villas in the wall paintings of their country houses (Ling 1977, esp. 5-6; 1991: 146-48). We need not here enter into the vexed question to what extent the visual conventions of villa landscape-painting may have influenced the verbal descriptions of Statius and his contemporaries (Bergmann 1991). For our purposes it is enough to observe that the more or less realistic representation of country mansions on house walls prefigures their enshrinement in the literary record a few decades later, and that both developments reflect the increasingly important symbolic function that villas came to acquire during the early Empire as architectural entities worthy of artistic commemoration in their own right. Later it was not wall-paintings but floor-mosaics, particularly those in the houses of North Africa, that kept the tradition alive (Prêcheur-Canonge 1961: 27-36).

3. Villa and tomb

What factors contributed principally to the development of the Roman conception of the villa as a personal monument? A satisfactory answer to this question would require us to consider, in addition to the points touched on above, the influence of Hellenistic palaces on Roman public and private architecture and, perhaps more importantly, on Roman thinking about power and the display of wealth (cf. La Rocca 1986: 8-24); Greek antecedents for the cult of the houses of great men (Pfister 1909-12: 347-53); the imitation in Roman domestic contexts of architectural forms traditionally associated with sacred spaces (Coarelli 1983b, esp. 199-215); the ambivalent Roman attitude toward the countryside, technological innovation, and the economic exploitation of the environment (Pavlovskis 1973; Purcell 1987b; 1995); and the significance of such Roman landmarks as the Villa Publica, founded in 435 B.C. near the Saepta in order to provide a headquarters for magistrates conducting the census or levying troops (Livy 4.22.7) and having become by the end of the Republic, as the introduction to Varro's third book of *Res Rusticae* demonstrates (3.2), a monument of considerable political, moral, and cultural importance (Agache 1987; Linderski 1989: 119-20; Purcell 1995: 151-54).

We should also have to consider the villa as a *locus* of various sorts of personal commemorative monument. Some of these, such as portrait busts and honorific statues, were no different from those traditionally found at urban residences (Neudecker 1988: 74-84). Others, however, seem to have been peculiarly suited to a rural environment. Social convention restricted the opportunities for visual self-promotion in the city to a few traditional modes, and these were closely regulated, at first by an aristocratic ethos that placed a high value on decorum and later by the emperor's pervasive control. Even before the emperors Gaius and Claudius put an official end to the unrestricted display in public by private citizens of personal likenesses (Suet., *Calig.* 34.1; Cass. Dio 60.25.2-3; Lahusen 1983: 102-3), the architectural and artistic forms by which prominent Romans advertised themselves to the urban populace were remarkably few and, with one or two exceptions, largely conventional in type.³⁷ Beyond the urban periphery, however, greater latitude had always been granted to innovative forms of display.

The exhibition of military decorations provides a case in point. During the Republic, beginning, perhaps, around 300 B.C., Roman generals who had won the privilege of a triumph adorned the vestibules of their urban residences with enemy spoils commemorating their victories. Common soldiers, too, who had killed an opponent in single combat evidently enjoyed the right to display the arms of the vanquished at their homes (Polyb. 6.39.10; Rawson 1990: 158-61). Houses that had been so decorated became personal monuments to the men who had owned them, since the trophies remained in place long after the properties changed hands.³⁸ The symbolic value of such displays was not lost on the first Princeps, who in 27 B.C., in accordance with a decree of the senate, wreathed the doorposts of his Palatine house with laurel and affixed a civic crown above the door (*R.G.* 34.2; Cass. Dio 53.16.4). Perhaps it was at this time too that the vestibule was hung with spoils in the traditional way (*Ov., Trist.* 3.1.33-34). The triumphal trophies were important in marking the victor at Actium as merely *primus inter pares* in the aristocratic competition for military glory (Wiseman 1987a: 405), but it was

37 See Lahusen 1983: 45-65 on statues; Eck 1984: 140-42, 145-48 on buildings; Wallace-Hadrill 1990 on arches; and Flower 1996 on *imagines*. This is not to say that the uses of personal monuments as political symbols were not complex: see Gregory 1994.

38 If Mayhoff's conjecture *aeternae* for the nonsensical *et me* at Pliny, *NH* 35.7 is correct, ornamental spoils affixed to private houses were meant to be permanent. It is at any rate clear that the memory attached to such residences endured: the famous *domus rostrata* of Pompey, whether or not still bearing the distinctive ships' beaks, yet retained its name some 300 years after his death when it belonged to the family of the emperor Gordian I (*SHA, Gord.* 3.6). According to Suetonius *Nero* 38.2, the great fire at Rome in 64 consumed a number of mansions of the generals of old 'adorned up to that point with enemy spoils' (*hostilibus adhuc spoliis adornatae*). Note also Cic., *Phil.* 2.68-69 with Wiseman 1987a: 394-95.

the more modest decorations bestowed by the senate and Roman people that captured the spirit of the new age. By subordinating the gaudy spoils of war to the venerable but simple Roman military honors of the laurel (symbolizing victory) and the crown of oak (originally awarded for rescuing a comrade in battle — in this case, as already with Caesar, for saving the entire citizenry, *ob cives servatos*: Weinstock 1971: 163-67), the Princeps was able to invest his residence with an almost religious aura by linking his personal valor with that of the divine guardians of the new order, Apollo and Jupiter (Ov., *Trist.* 3.1.35-42; Zanker 1988: 92-94). From this masterful synthesis there could be no return to the traditional display of military regalia at private homes. In 19 B.C. L. Cornelius Balbus celebrated the last triumph granted to a Roman commander who was not a member of the imperial family (*Inscr.Ital.* XIII.1, p. 86 fr. xli). Thereafter victorious generals received only triumphal decorations (*ornamenta triumphalia*), the distinctive ornaments and dress of a *triumphator* (Campbell 1984: 358-62; Eck 1984: 138-43); as far as we know, the right to exhibit trophies at one's house was not among them (Maxfield 1981: 105). Here, as so often elsewhere, Augustus co-opted a traditional medium of aristocratic self-advertisement as a special prerogative of the Princeps (Rawson 1990: 160; Hickson 1991).

But if the emperor's show of military honors at his Palatine residence was purposefully modest, intended to suggest the pristine virtue of the old Republic, outside the capital he was prepared to indulge in a more extravagant and a more poignant demonstration. At his villa on Capri Augustus created a museum park with less subtle thematic associations. There he displayed, along with the arms of ancient heroes, a collection of 'giants' bones' (*gigantum ossa*), the skeletons of extinct animals (Suet., *Aug.* 72.3): both were relics of the past. During his aedileship in 58 B.C. M. Aemilius Scaurus had exhibited at Rome the forty-foot long skeleton of the monster that threatened Andromeda, which he had recovered from Joppa in Judaea (Pliny, *NH* 9.11; Solin. 34.2; cf. Coleman 1996: 61-62). Augustus's exhibit trumped Scaurus's and established a more appropriate venue for such displays. When Cicero in 70 B.C. accused Verres of stealing military spoils and whisking them away to the suburban villas of his friends, the charge of theft was compounded by Verres's perceived effrontery in misappropriating the glory of others (Cic., 2 *Verr.* 1.54, 3.9, 4.121).³⁹ By the early years of the 1st c. A.D., however, the old Republican tradition of competitive display had been fully trivialized: no longer did social climbers purchase actual weapons to hang as status symbols on their houses (cf. Malcovati, *ORF*⁴ Cato fr. 97); instead fashionable villa-owners displayed ornamental friezes depicting captured arms at their suburban retreats (Mielsch 1987: 46-48). What had once been a distinctive badge of military glory survived now only as a banal decorative motif vaguely suggestive of aristocratic valor.

Other, more idiosyncratic displays at Roman villas always retained their original purposes of self-advertisement and personal commemoration. Sulla claimed to have been awarded a *corona graminea* by his troops at Nola during the Social War and to have had the scene painted in his Tusculan villa, which Cicero later owned (Pliny, *NH* 22.12). Bestowal of a grass crown, the highest honor a commander could earn, was a rarity, harking back to the early days of the Republic (Maxfield 1981: 67-69), but Sulla's commemoration of the scene in a private wall-painting seems to have been rarer still — indeed, no comparable example of such an autobiographical scene in a Roman domestic setting survives.⁴⁰ Traditionally it was the deeds of

39 Compare Cicero's remarks on the disposition of the art treasures seized by M. Marcellus, the sacker of Syracuse, in 212 B.C. (2 *Verr.* 4.121): nihil in aedibus, nihil in hortis posuit, nihil in suburbano; putavit, si urbis ornamenta domum suam non contulisset, domum suam ornamento urbi futuram.

40 Sidonius's letter on Leontius's castle describes a peristyle painted with an historical cycle celebrating the Pontic origins of Leontius's family (*Ep.* 22.158-68), and we hear of similar representations in private homes, none of which provides a close parallel to Sulla's depiction: see Bodel 1994b: 241 f. The portrait medallions of (probably) Augustus's daughter Julia and his wife Livia painted in the imperial villa at Boscotrecase belong to a very different tradition: cf. Anderson 1987. Catullus's *Phaselus ille* (4),

legendary heroes and the mythological stories of the gods that were represented in this medium and context (Ling 1991: 101-41). In one respect, then, Sulla's experiment in self-glorification anticipated Augustus's later exhibition of military honors at his Palatine residence: in both cases a modest but venerable military decoration was associated by the manner of its presentation with greater-than-human achievements. Whereas Augustus's display at his urban residence broke with convention, however, Sulla's choice of venue for his experimentation with a novel form of personal commemoration fit into a well-established tradition.

According to the Elder Pliny, Cicero erected monuments to himself at the "Academy" on his Cumaean estate between Lake Avernus and Puteoli; there in Pliny's day one could read a poem written by Cicero's freedman, Laurea, commemorating both the villa and the medicinal springs that had surfaced on the property after Cicero's death (NH 31.6-8). Precisely what form Cicero's monuments may have taken we cannot say, but at a time when the public award of honorific statues to the dynasts was (with Cicero's help) rapidly eclipsing the Republican tradition of personal initiative in this form of self-promotion (Wallace-Hadrill 1990: 165, 173), the new man is unlikely to have indulged his vanity in quite so brazen a fashion at his urban residence 'in the sight of nearly the whole city' (*in conspectu prope totius urbis*, Cic., *Dom.* 100). No such compunction constrained the emperor Nero, whose Domus Aurea took the fashionable conceit of *rus in urbe* to unprecedented extremes: in the vestibule of his palace, overlooking the approach to the complex from the Forum up the Sacra Via, the emperor erected a bronze colossus of himself 120 feet tall (Suet., *Ner.* 31.1; Purcell 1987b: 199). Visitors to the Tuscan estate of the Younger Pliny were treated to a less imposing, if no less vainglorious, display: box shrubs clipped into the shapes of letters to spell out the proprietor's name (Pliny *Ep.* 5.6.35). At the suburban villa of A. Umbricius Scaurus outside the Porta Marina at Pompeii (VII Ins. Occ. 12-15), a secondary atrium boasted a mosaic floor celebrating the owner's commercial ventures as a trader in fish sauce (Curtis 1984). In North African villas of the 2nd c., polychrome floor mosaics commemorated beast hunts and gladiatorial exhibitions sponsored by the owners of the house (Brown 1992; Dunbabin 1978); and so on. These and other randomly preserved instances of self-representation in Roman domestic contexts illuminate the societal attitudes that allowed a man to flaunt himself more openly at his country seat than at his urban residence, but their idiosyncratic nature makes it difficult to assess the precise impact any particular example may have had on general perceptions and practices.

One type of monument, however, is so frequently associated with villa properties in our sources that we may reasonably suppose it to have played an instrumental rôle in the formation of the particular qualities of personal and familial commemoration that many villas eventually came to possess. As was noted at the outset, monumental tombs on villa properties had become a characteristic feature of the suburban landscape already by the 2nd c. B.C., and both before and after that time the modest graves of country dwellers dotted the countryside. The importance of this latter group deserves to be emphasized, since the numerical preponderance of rural graves is generally under-represented in standard studies of Roman burial practices, which have naturally tended to focus on the more or less organized cemeteries and tomb-lined roads characteristic of the suburban periphery of Roman towns throughout the western world (e.g., Toynbee 1971, Prieur 1986, Hesberg-Zanker 1987a). Many, perhaps most Romans, however — certainly a majority of rural peasants — were buried in the fields, away from major thoroughfares. A few imposing tomb structures on villa sites are well known (e.g., Toynbee 1971: 101-244 or Prieur 1986: 79-100, *passim*), and the Younger Pliny reminds us of the many more modest monuments that have not survived (*Ep.* 8.17.5 with Sherwin-White 1966 *ad loc.*). One has only to look through any volume of the *CIL* pertaining to Italy or the western provinces, however, to get an idea from the number of unpretentious epitaphs reportedly

if indeed a description of a painting in his villa at Sirmio (so Williams 1968: 192-94), furnishes an amusing analogue.

discovered *in agro*, far from any public road, of the many more humble folk who were laid to rest in the countryside. Not all of these inscriptions, of course, were discovered *in situ*, and not all reports of their discovery can be considered reliable; some stones no doubt derived from the formal burial zones outside Roman towns. But the land-surveyor Siculus Flaccus, in warning his pupils not to confuse gravestones with boundary markers, says that Romans customarily located tombs near the edges of their private estates and that in rocky and barren areas graves could be found even in the middle of rural properties.⁴¹ The epigraphic record in any case supplies only part of the picture, for by no means all rural burials were marked with inscribed tombstones. Excavations in Britain and throughout the western provinces confirm that modest farms often contained within their borders small private cemeteries of anonymous graves (presumably serving the peasant families and slave laborers who worked the land), as well as isolated burials sunk randomly in marginal areas (Jones 1987: 826-29).

We can never know, nor for our purposes does it matter, what proportion of all Romans was buried on country properties, yet alone what proportion of those received formal commemoration. It is clear that many villa owners chose to be laid to rest at their rural estates and that many other country dwellers were of necessity interred in the fields where they lived and worked. What bears remarking in this context is the perception apparently common to both groups, as indeed it was to most Romans, that burial and commemoration went hand in hand (Meyer 1990: 77). It is true that whole classes of persons (certain urban slaves, the indigent, the rural poor) were regularly consigned to the oblivion of anonymous graves (Eck 1988; Bodel 1994a: 38-39, 81-83); but the overwhelming bulk of our literary, inscriptional, and legal evidence points to the conclusion that Romans who could afford an inscribed epitaph or other funerary marker normally received one. The term *monumentum*, 'that which is written or done to preserve memory' (Varro, *Ling.* 6.49; cf. Paul., exc. Fest. 139 M.; *Dig.* 11.7.2.6, 11.7.42), was in classical Latin *vox propria* for "tomb", and the primary purpose of a tomb, as a wealth of epigraphic testimony attests (Häusle 1980), was to keep alive the memory of the deceased. Central to this objective was the regular observance of propitiatory rites at the site of the grave, a custom so fundamental to Roman religious life that it found its way early on into the official calendar in the festival of the *Parentalia*, during which kinsfolk visited the burial sites of their deceased relatives (Wissowa 1912: 232-33; Radke 1990: 17-19; Bodel 1994a: 60f.). If the tomb fronted on a public road, then paying respect to the dead presented no practical difficulties. But if the grave was located in a rural plot off the beaten track, the right of access to it might be jeopardized if the property changed hands. Legal cautions were available to ensure free passageway, and some jurists maintained that the owners of familial tombs had a natural and inalienable right of access even without formal dispensation.⁴² In practice, however, the co-operation of the heir was essential, and many landowners entertained justifiable doubts about the piety of strangers who might come into the property after their deaths.

When the Younger Pliny visited the country estate of Verginius Rufus at Alsium nine years after the general had died, he was dismayed to find that the modest tomb Verginius had planned for himself was not yet completed. Evidently the heir had disposed of the property, which at the time of Pliny's visit belonged to his mother-in-law, and had thus sought to evade responsibility for constructing a monument (Pliny, *Ep.* 6.10.1-3; cf. Tellegen 1982: 100-7). Such was the fate of a man who had enjoyed the distinction of a public funeral (Pliny, *Ep.* 2.1.1, 3), and it

41 Sic. Flacc., *De condic. agr.* (*Corpus agrimensorum romanorum*, p. 104 Thulin), ... sepulchra in extremis finibus facere soliti sunt et cippos ponere ... nam in locis saxuosis et in sterilibus etiam in mediis possessionibus sepulchra faciunt.

42 The principal legal texts — *Dig.* 8.1.14.1 (Paul), 11.7.10, 11.7.12.pr. (Ulpian), 19.1.53.1 (Labeo and Paul), 47.12.5 (Pomponius) — are discussed by De Visscher 1963: 83-92 and Kaser 1978: 81-82. Cf. also CIL 5.3849 = ILS 8356: a rural tomb for sale along with the right to draw water from a well at nearby *suburbanum Rutilianum*.

reminded Pliny poignantly why the living should 'anticipate all the responsibilities of heirs' by erecting their own monuments (*Ep.* 6.10.5). Martial begged the future owner of his little farm (*agellum*) to observe the customary annual rites at the grave of his young slave Erotion, whom he had buried there (10.61), and elsewhere remarked the piety of Silius Italicus, who had acquired Virgil's tomb from a previous owner too poor to tend it properly (11.48-49; cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 3.7.8). These brief notices provide a glimpse of the concerns that prompted many Romans to include in their wills specific provisions for the erection of an epitaph, or the maintenance of a tomb, or the regular observance of commemorative rites at the site of a grave (Johnston 1988b: 99-102; Meyer 1990: 78; Champlin 1991: 171-77). They also enable us to see that in certain respects Cicero's eccentric plans to deify his daughter Tullia after her death in 45 B.C. were inspired by considerations no different from those that motivated others seeking more conventional forms of posthumous commemoration (cf. Shackleton Bailey 1966: 404-13).

After settling on a suitable site for a shrine — the suburban estate of a certain Scapula (perhaps T. Quinctius) in the Campus Vaticanus (Cic., *Att.* 13.33a [330 SB] 1; cf. 12.37 [276 SB] 2) — Cicero addressed the practical problems he would face were he to purchase the property. If he built a monument in the villa itself, he felt he could ensure the desiderated aura of apotheosis, but he worried that subsequent owners of the house (no thought here of young Marcus) might find the structure a nuisance and disturb it. The alternative was to set up a shrine on the surrounding land, where Cicero was confident it would be treated with respect; but this too seemed unsatisfactory, perhaps because the area contained so many tombs that the distinctive character of Tullia's monument — a temple (*fanum*), as he was at pains to stress, rather than a tomb — would not be easy to maintain (Cic., *Att.* 12.36 [275 SB] 1 with Shackleton Bailey 1966 *ad loc.* and 409-10). In the event, Cicero learned that Caesar had designs on the Campus Vaticanus for his own building plans (Cic., *Att.* 13.33a [330 SB] 1); the prospect of acquiring the Scapulan property consequently lost its appeal; and with this disappointment Cicero's enthusiasm for erecting a shrine to his daughter seems also to have lapsed (Shackleton Bailey 1966: 411). Two aspects of the abortive project to commemorate Tullia nonetheless deserve brief attention.

It is noteworthy that, of the many different plans that Cicero entertained for the shrine to Tullia, all of which ultimately came to naught, he never once considered purchasing a plot for the shrine alone. Always the site was to include a villa, a place for him to grow old (ἐγγήραμα) watching over the monument to his beloved daughter. For the bereaved, having a memorial to a loved one in the vicinity of one's residence provided an emotional satisfaction not to be derived from other sources, for one obvious reason: proximity to a monument facilitated the regular observance of rites designed to keep alive the memory of the deceased. So, for example, Martial empathised with a father who had buried his daughter in the fields of his suburban *horti*: better the man had gone to the grave before her, but since that was not to be, let him live 'to cultivate her bones' (*ut ossa colat*, 1.114). So too Statius, in his moving *epicedion* for his father, imagines himself delivering his lament while leaning on the tomb where his father is presumed to rest easy, holding the family fields (*iugera nostra tenens*, *Silv.* 5.3.36-37). The implication that the deceased patriarch finds comfort in being interred on his own property points to the inherent emotional appeal of securing burial on a familial estate: quite apart from any consideration of propagating one's own fame, occupying soil owned by one's offspring and shared with one's ancestors gratified a deep-seated Roman desire for physical as well as spiritual continuity in family history. So, for example, the long verse epitaph composed by the son of a Roman soldier who died at Cillium (Kasserine) around the middle of the 2nd c. A.D. maintains that the deceased father 'prefers to accompany this monument and to live for eternity in the inscribed record ... and to have by him forever the home which he gave his children.'⁴³ Hence too the plausibility of the story in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* of a poor

43 CIL 8.211-12 = CLE 1552 = Courtney 1995 no. 199A, ll. 57-61: mavolt haec monumenta sequi scriptis-q(ue) per aevom / vivere nominibus... / quosq(ue) dedit natis prope semper habere penates, tr. Courtney.

farmer who, having endured the violent encroachments by a wealthy neighbor on his property, finally resisted outright eviction 'so that he could at least retain his paternal plot for his own grave' (*ut suo saltem sepulcro paternum retineret solum*, 9.35).

Second, it is curious that Cicero never once tells us where Tullia was buried. To conclude from his silence that the location of her grave was unimportant is unwarranted, but Cicero's plans for Tullia's deification evidently did not require the presence of her earthly remains. In other words, we may safely discard any notion that Cicero's choice of a site for her monument was influenced by practical considerations for the disposition of his daughter's corpse. Rather it is the celebrity of the location (Shackleton Bailey 1966: 406-7) and the proximity to it of a suitable residence for his old age that are uppermost in Cicero's mind. This topographical association of villa and cenotaph is one striking indicator of the close conceptual connection between country houses and commemoration of the dead: even when the grave of a loved one was situated elsewhere, it was comforting to preserve the memory of the deceased at one's villa. Rural tombs and other commemorative monuments thus came to be perceived as closely tied to the domestic buildings where the deceased had lived and where surviving members of the family kept memory of the past alive. We have seen this associative connection made explicit in tombstones erected in the vicinity of the country houses to which they refer, often with the express purpose of preserving the property on which both are located in the family name. It remains to observe that the type of monument proposed for Tullia — a cenotaph rather than a tomb — fits comfortably into this same cultural context.

The epitaph of a freedman of one of the consuls of A.D. 26 set up at Rome by the consul's son states explicitly that the man is buried on the spot but that another monument has been dedicated on the son's Sabine estate, *in villa Bruttiana*.⁴⁴ The freedman had been the son's guardian and a procurator of both men, perhaps at the Sabine property mentioned in the epitaph, and this may explain why a cenotaph was erected there, at his former home. But a similar explanation cannot hold for a comparable inscription of mid 2nd-c. date reportedly discovered near Tusculum in which the deceased, a young slave, is made to say, in rough elegiac couplets, that he had died and was buried at Pollentia in Liguria but that his master had dedicated to him an empty grave (that is, the one from which the surviving epitaph derives) overlooking his master's villa, so that the master could make offerings to him with his own hands.⁴⁵ We may be inclined to dismiss as idiosyncrasy the notion that the monument itself could stand as a suitable surrogate for the deceased in receiving wine and flowers, but it would be a mistake to underestimate the therapeutic function such cenotaphs served in providing the bereaved with an outlet for their grief. The slaves and freedmen of the younger Agrippina may have been inspired as much by political motives as by sentiment when they erected a cenotaph to their slain mistress on the road to Misenum near the imposing villa of her great great grand-uncle Caesar (Tac., *Ann.* 14.9.3; Cass. Dio 62.10.4), but the association of her monument with his country mansion appealed to a deep-seated emotion and conformed to a well-established tradition.

For the famous mausoleum of the Flavii at Cillium, see *Les Flavii de Cillium* 1993 with Hitchner 1995.

44 CIL 6.9834 = ILS 7387: Cn. Cornelius / Atimetus / Cn. Lentuli Gaetulici / l(ibertus) et procurator /⁵ eiusdem fidelissimus / hic sepultus est. / Cossus Cornelius / Cn. [f.] Lentulus / Gaetulicus /¹⁰ procuratori suo / fidelissimo et / nutricao piissimo / de suo fecit et / monumentum /¹⁵ in Sabinis suis / in villa / Bruttiana. For the two Gaetulici, father and son, see *PIR*² C 1390, 1392. How the Cornelii Lentuli came into a villa once owned by a Bruttius we cannot say: no trace of a marital connection between the two families survives.

45 CIL 6.16913 = CLE 1185, q.v. for the date: Dis Manib(us). / Domestico, qui vixit ann(is) XVI. / hoc mihi noster erus sacravit / inane sepulcrum, villae tecta suae /⁵ propter ut aspicerem, utque suis / manibus flores mihi vinaque / saepe funderet et lacrimam, quod / mihi pluris erit. nostros nam cineres / Pollentia saeva subegit, est et ibi /¹⁰ tumulus, nomen, et ara mihi M. Caerellius / Smaragdianus fecit.

The fact that some monumental tombs were built to resemble houses while others were constructed in imitation of the towers that articulated the massive enclosing walls of luxurious rural estates (cf. Toynbee 1971: 132-43, 164-72; Quilici and Quilici Gigli 1978) is probably in the first instance a reflection of the popular conception of the tomb as a home of the dead (e.g., Lattimore 1942: 165-67; Barbieri 1975: 334-50, 356-61, 402-3; Petr. 71.5-7, Stat., *Silv.* 5.1.235-38, etc.); but the architectural imitation also points up the harmonic relationship that existed between country houses and rural tombs — a relationship not only visual, in that the vista presented to a passerby surveying the ensemble formed a seamless unity (Purcell 1987a: 31-32), but also conceptual. For the safest means of ensuring continuity of observance at the rural tomb of a family member or loved one was to ensure that the property on which it was located remained in the hands of those most likely to feel the pull of sentiment — or at least the tug of moral obligation. Topographical proximity thus generated a unity of purpose in the testamentary disposition of family tombs and the rural estates on which they were located, a unity that eventually (and inevitably) led to a more general association of the latter with the phenomenon of commemoration.

David Johnston (1988a; 1988b: 77-107) has elucidated the common aims served by family trusts and tomb settlements by pointing to the prominent rôle played in each by freedmen, whose principal function, from the point of view of the testator, was to keep alive the memory of the deceased. As with trusts enjoining the construction and maintenance of funerary monuments, so with perpetual settlements of landed property, Roman testators aimed above all to further the remembrance of themselves and to secure the continuation of their family names. The legal devices employed to these ends were different — patrimonial settlements were set up as *fideicommissa*, whereas funerary arrangements relied on modal dispositions — but the underlying purpose of commemoration remained the same. In highlighting this functional similarity Johnston is careful to distinguish between the goals of personal commemoration and familial succession, for which he finds little evidence in the legal texts concerning perpetuities and trusts involving landed property. To the extent that differentiating the two aims helps to refute the popular notion that family trusts arose out of testators' concerns for the maintenance of their tombs, such a distinction is both salutary and necessary. It is worth remembering, however, that, quite apart from formal devices such as *fideicommissa* and dispositions *sub modo*, the testamentary transmission of property regularly carried with it an implicit moral obligation to preserve the memory of the testator (Champlin 1989: 213-14). Even in cases of intestate succession, social convention held the heir to an estate responsible not only for the burial but also for the formal commemoration of the deceased (Meyer 1990: 74-78). This was more a matter of custom than of law, but there is ample evidence of juristic interest in the question from an early period. Already at the end of the 2nd c. B.C. Q. Mucius Scaevola the pontiff was refining the opinions of his predecessors concerning the assignation of responsibility among beneficiaries of a man's estate for performing funerary rites in his honor, and by the end of the Republic, according to Cicero (*Leg.* 2.48-49), the books of the jurisconsults were filled with countless regulations on the topic. For Cicero the will of the pontiffs, and hence the underlying principle in such matters, was clear: the duty to perform *sacra* went with the money: *pontifices cum pecunia sacra coniungi volunt* (*Leg.* 2.50). So strong was the association of costly funerary rites with heirship that already in Plautus's day popular usage had given rise to a proverbial expression, *sine sacris hereditas*, 'an inheritance without rites,' to describe a gift with no strings attached (Plaut., *Trin.* 484; cf. Otto 1890: 163).

Commemoration of the deceased came to be so closely associated with heirship that the jurists were obliged repeatedly to deny that burying a dead man entailed entering into inheritance of his estate (*Dig.* 11.7.4; Saller and Shaw 1984: 126). That a majority of epitaphs were erected by close relatives of the deceased confirms how regularly heirship fell within the immediate family but need not imply that the duty to commemorate was regarded as a specifically familial obligation (Meyer 1990: 77-78); on the other hand, many commemorators related

to the deceased cannot have been their heirs (Saller 1994: 98-99). The epigraphic evidence suggests that when landed property changed hands at death, whatever portion of it was destined to house the remains of the deceased regularly passed by inheritance from one member of a family to another. From such a pattern of transmission it follows that the goals of posthumous commemoration and continuity in familial ownership of particular properties (to the extent that this was in fact an aim) could in many cases have been satisfied simultaneously by the fulfillment of the traditional, extra-legal, obligations incumbent upon each successive heir.⁴⁶

It is not surprising, then, to find that in legal texts of the classical period the association of tombs with inherited rural estates is less frequently a matter of juristic concern than an incidental detail imported along with the pertinent facts of a particular case. So, for instance, in a famous passage of Cervidius Scaevola often taken (mistakenly, as Johnston has shown) to demonstrate a legal connection between family trusts and tomb settlements, a provision against alienation recorded in the will of a certain Julius Agrippa, a great great uncle of Julia Domna, adventitiously reveals his perception of his grave and suburban estate as a single, indivisible entity distinct from his urban residence.⁴⁷ The emotional ties that bound a proprietor to inherited real estate containing familial graves were felt to be so inviolable that under certain circumstances normal principles of equity might be subverted in the interest of preserving them intact. When the eminent Hadrianic jurist Juventius Celsus addressed the question of compensation in the case of an illegal purchase of land, transacted in good faith by the buyer, from one who was not in fact the legal owner, he ruled that under normal circumstances an evicted buyer who had invested money in developing the property was entitled to be fully reimbursed for the expenses incurred. But if the rightful owner were poor and payment of fair restitution would require him 'to give up his household gods and ancestral graves,' the good judge, in Celsus's view, would grant the aggrieved party no more than the right to remove whatever building materials he could from the property without leaving it in worse condition than when he had acquired it. Ancestral graves and household *lares* are joined in Celsus's hypothesis in a kind of hendiadys to stand for the sort of property man holds most dear and from which he is least easily parted. Hence the relevance of his specification, for the sake of plausibility, that the rightful owner be a poor man: for more financially secure members of Roman society, alienation of hearth and home — and ancestral graves — would be unthinkable.⁴⁸ So it was already for the wealthy landowners threatened with dispossession by the land commission of Ti. Gracchus, who complained that they were being made to give up the graves of their ancestors, which had been allotted to them in the division of their fathers' estates (App., *Bell. Civ.* 1.10; cf. Gabba 1958: 27 *ad loc.*). So too it was nearly a century later for Cicero, who, when needing an example of the type of landed property held by the most certain tenure, invoked a man's hereditary estate, citing in particular his own paternal and ancestral farm at Arpinum (*meus paternus avitusque fundus Arpinas*, *Agr.* 3.7-8): there were the tombs of his ancestors and the villa in which he was born (*Leg.* 2.3; cf. Treggiari 1979: 65-67).

⁴⁶ On somewhat different grounds Champlin 1991: 179-80 argues that the landed properties recorded in the *Digest* as passing to family members by *fideicomissa* were precisely those containing the grave sites of the testators; thus family settlements of real estate and dispositions of familial tombs served the same ends.

⁴⁷ *Dig.* 32.38.4 (Scaev. 19 *Dig.*): Iulius Agrippa primipilaris testamento suo cavit ne ullo modo reliquias eius et praedium suburbanum aut domum maiorem heres eius pigneraret aut ullo modo alienaret. Note the placement of the copulative and the disjunctive conjunctions, a nuance obscured in Johnston's translation (1988b: 97-98).

⁴⁸ *Dig.* 6.1.38 (Cels. 3 *Dig.*): finge pauperem, qui, si reddere id cogatur, laribus sepulchris avitis carendum habeat. A ms. of the 9th or 10th c. includes *paternis* after *laribus* — plausibly but not necessarily. For the privileged ties that bound a natural heir to his ancestral home (*aviti lares*), note also Val. Max. 7.7.1: a discharged soldier mistakenly disinherited by his father sues successfully for the return of his paternal estate.

Nearly a century and a half ago Fustel de Coulanges recognized an important association between familial tombs and ancestral properties (1980 [1864]: 53-59). His formulation of the connection between them was flawed in its insistence on the primacy of the *gens* as a group in determining the behavior of individuals, but Fustel was right to see that attachment to the land was enhanced by the presence on it of familial tombs and that private burial practices therefore impinged on attitudes toward real estate (Humphreys 1993: 140-47 [= Fustel de Coulanges 1980: xv-xxiii]). What needs to be emphasized here is the extent to which the Roman association of family tomb and rural villa, reinforced by topographical proximity, resulted in a natural transference of the commemorative value inherent in the former to the latter. An epitaph of late Republican date set up at Rome by a freedman doctor for himself, his wife, their freedmen, and their descendants illustrates this conceptual syncretism nicely: 'This is our eternal home,' the text declares, 'this is our farm; this is our suburban estate, this is our monument.'⁴⁹ Home (*domus*), farm (*fundus*), and suburban estate (*horti*) are here linked with the tomb, but the nature of the relationship among them is (to us) not entirely clear; for if the first clause is clearly metaphorical and the last, equally clearly, literal, the second and third can be taken either way (Mattei 1986: 155; cf. CLE 2177). The ambiguity derives from the semantic latitude inherent in the Roman concepts of home and monument, and the explicit association here of both with villa properties shows how closely the three ideas came to be wed in the popular imagination. Already by the late years of the Republic it was clear that a familial villa no less than a familial tomb could perpetuate the memory of its owner and his line.

4. The *lararium* of the Volusii Saturnini

In conclusion it may be useful to consider the cultural implications of one well-known early imperial villa where a fusion of the traditional household cult of the *lares* with remembrance of the dead illustrates in particularly striking fashion how a form of commemorative expression traditionally associated with funerary monuments could be transposed into a country house passed down in the family from one generation to the next.

Ever since its discovery in 1962 during construction of the Autostrada del Sole some 30 km north of Rome near Lucus Feroniae, the country estate of the Volusii Saturnini has been recognized as one of the premier examples of an Italian luxury villa converted into a labor-intensive working farm (Moretti-Sgubini Moretti 1977). An old and senatorial family by the last years of the Republic, the Volusii Saturnini first rose to prominence during the reign of Augustus with the consulship in 12 B.C. of Lucius, the son of Quintus, whom Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.30.2) describes as the 'first accumulator' (*primus accumulator*) of the family's spectacular wealth (cf. Syme 1964: 156 [= 1979: 2.605-6]). There followed an unbroken string of consulships and other high offices of state for Lucius's son, grandson, and great grandsons, culminating in an ordinary consulship in A.D. 92 for Quintus, the last of the line securely documented in the historical record (Eck 1972; cf. Schumacher 1982: 259-63, 262 for a possible identification of a son of Lucius, the consul of 87). Throughout this period the family prospered from lucrative investments in rural and urban properties and, despite their substantial wealth, enjoyed friendly relations with the emperors (Tac., *Ann.* 13.30.2; Syme 1983b: 126-27 [= 1988: 4.258]; *I Volusii Saturnini* 1982).

The building history of the villa complex follows the fortunes of the family. Construction of the original nucleus sometime around the middle of the 1st c. B.C. (Moretti-Sgubini Moretti 1977: 8, 16, 20) is plausibly assigned to Quintus, the father of the consul of 12 B.C., a man of some consequence who was with Cicero in Cilicia in 50 B.C. and who, despite Tacitus's clear intima-

49 CIL 6.9583 = 1² 1319 = ILS 8341 = ILLRP 798; cf. CLE 247; Mattei 1986: 154 (with a photograph): C. Hostius C. l. Pamphilus / medicus hoc monumentum / emit sibi et Nelpiae M. l. Hymmini / et libertis et libertabus omnibus /⁵ postereisque eorum. / haec est domus aeterna, hic est / fundus, heis sunt horti, hoc / est monumentum nostrum. / in fronte p(edes) XIII, in agrum p(edes) XXIII.

tion to the contrary, may already have been actively engaged in founding the family fortune (Torelli 1973-74: 748; D'Arms 1981: 69-70; Syme 1986: 295). Subsequently, near the turn of the era, the residential quarters underwent substantial restructuring and a large peristyle was added off the rear of the house, around three sides of which were built a number of simple rooms of uniform construction destined to house the workforce of what had by now become a highly productive agricultural estate (Moretti-Sgubini Moretti 1977: 8-9, 16-17, 22). A third and final phase characterized by poorer building materials and shoddy workmanship and largely confined to the peripheral sectors of the complex imported few significant changes to the overall design and probably belongs to a much later period (Moretti-Sgubini Moretti 1977: 10, 19-20).

By far the most notable feature of the villa, as has long been recognized, is a mid-sized room located in the middle of the north side of the peristyle directly opposite the residential quarters, axially aligned with the atrium of the original dwelling and visible from it via a central passageway linking the two sectors of the expanded complex (fig. 1).⁵⁰ This centrally located room, like the others built around the large peristyle, is datable to the second phase of construction, that plausibly assigned to the consul of 12 B.C. In contrast to the purely functional aspect of the rooms flanking it on either side, this larger space — a focal point for those entering the house from the front — is handsomely decorated with a black-and-white tile geometric mosaic and was clearly intended for a more refined use (figs. 2-3). Among its furnishings were a marble altar decorated with symbols of sacerdotal office (the *lituus* of the augurate and a laurel bough representing the Arval brotherhood), alluding to the priestly career of the consul of A.D. 3 (fig. 3; cf. Torelli 1982: 38); a neo-attic marble bench and table; and an L-shaped shelf or counter built in three phases around the north and east walls.

Affixed to the front of the shelf on the east wall were two large marble inscriptions recording the careers of Lucius and Quintus Saturninus, the consuls of A.D. 3 and 56 respectively, and in the case of Lucius, detailing an unprecedented number of honorific statues (nine) erected at various sites in Rome (figs. 4-6; cf. Eck 1972: 463-77 and Panciera 1982: 83-87). Nearby in the peristyle were found four badly damaged marble portrait busts of Julio-Claudian or early Flavian date (two male and two female), a third female portrait bust belonging, perhaps, to the late Trajanic period, and parts of a male and a female statue (Moretti-Sgubini Moretti 1977: 17-18, 20, 38-40; Neudecker 1988: 157). The earlier portrait busts, which evidently represented family members (possibly the consuls of A.D. 3 and 56 and their wives), were probably displayed on the shelf, perhaps in the spaces between the statues; honorific inscriptions commemorating the careers of the consul of 12 B.C. and his father, the founder of the villa, presumably fronted the shelf along the north wall (Torelli 1982: 38-39).

The excavators concluded that they had uncovered the *lararium* of the villa, the center of the household worship, and although there does not seem to be another *lararium* quite like it in the Roman world, the identification has since won general acceptance (Moretti-Sgubini Moretti 1977: 18). It is not the architectural form of the shrine that sets it apart — separate rooms and even buildings made over to the household cult (several with benches distributed around the sides) have been found at Pompeii and elsewhere (Boyce 1937: 18; Orr 1978: 1578, 1586); rather it is the commemorative monuments displayed within the room, which lend it the air of a private museum, that distinguish the *lararium* of the Volusii from other known examples of the type. Portrait busts of ancestors are not uncommon in villas of the early Empire, nor are portraits and statues of living proprietors, which were often set up by grateful clients to honor their patrons (Neudecker 1988: 74-84; cf. Flower 1996: 40-46). But whole series of portrait busts arranged in an ancestor gallery such as we find at the *villa Volusiana* are extremely rare: a recent survey registers only two other villas known to have housed similar collections (Neu-

50 For axial orientation and optical symmetry in Roman domestic design as a means of focusing the viewer's attention, see Bek 1979 and Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 82-83 [1994: 44-45].

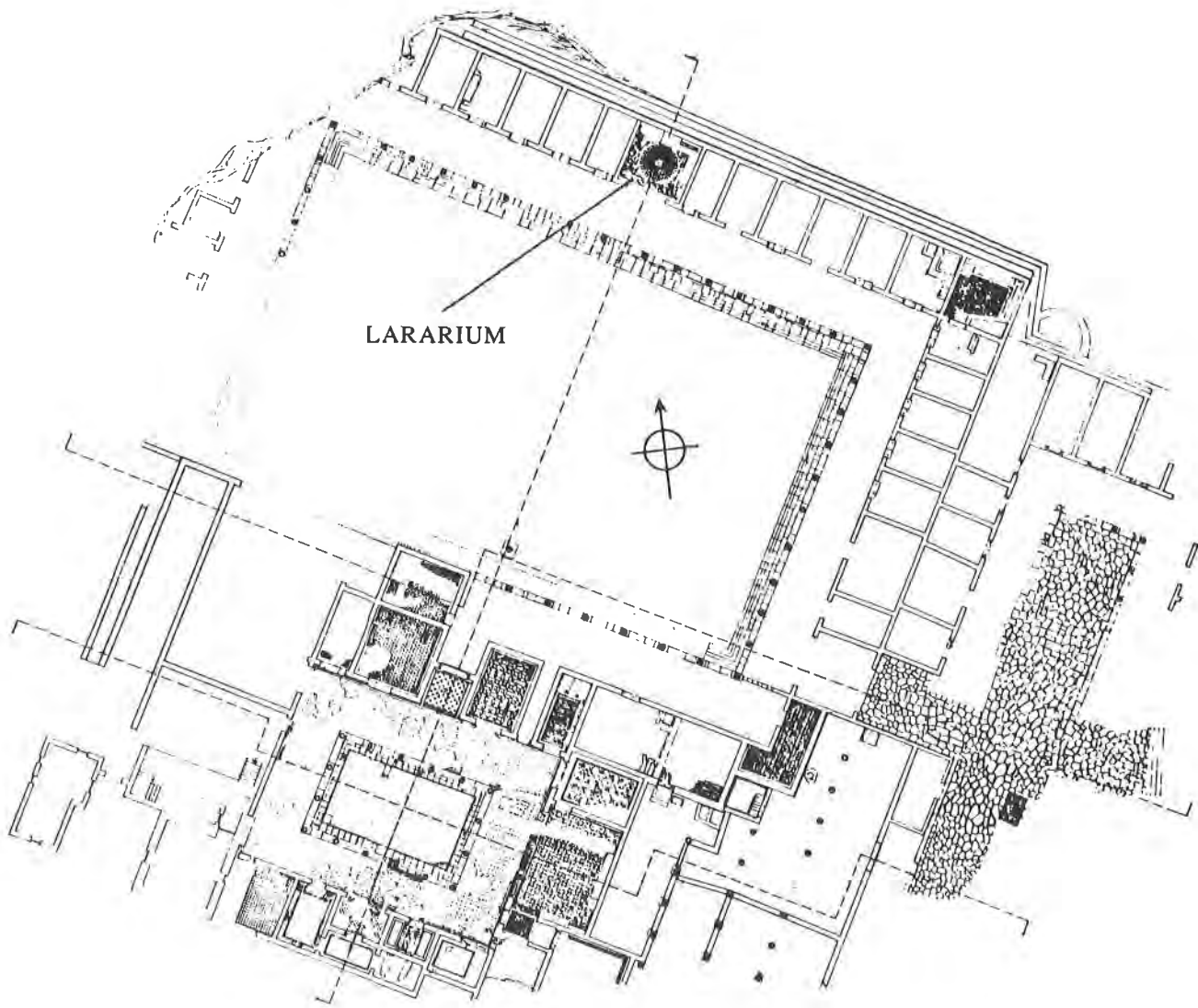


Fig.1. Villa of the Volusii Saturnini at Lucus Feroniae, general plan (after Moretti-Sgubini Moretti 1977).

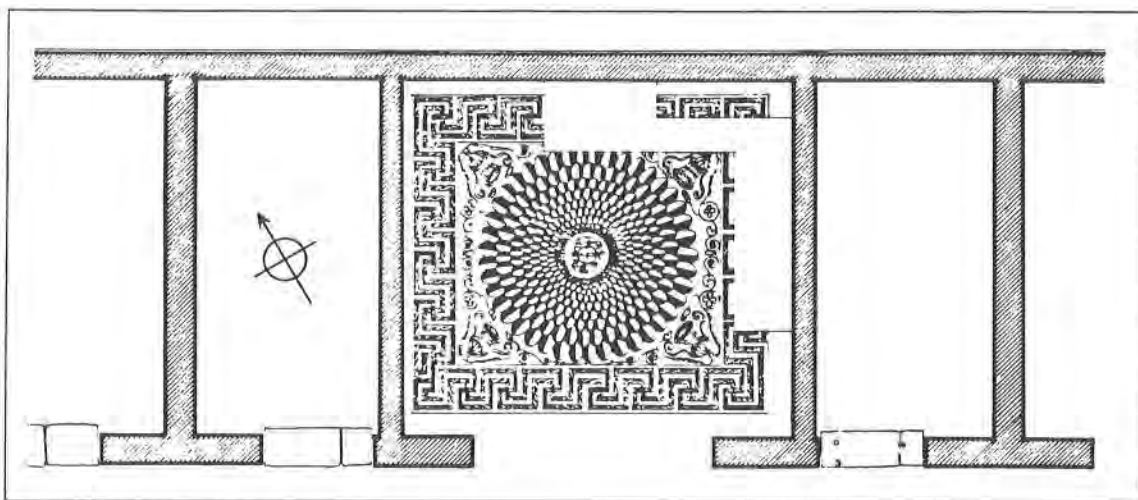


Fig.2. Villa of the Volusii Saturnini, *lararium* floorplan (after Moretti-Sgubini Moretti 1977, 32).

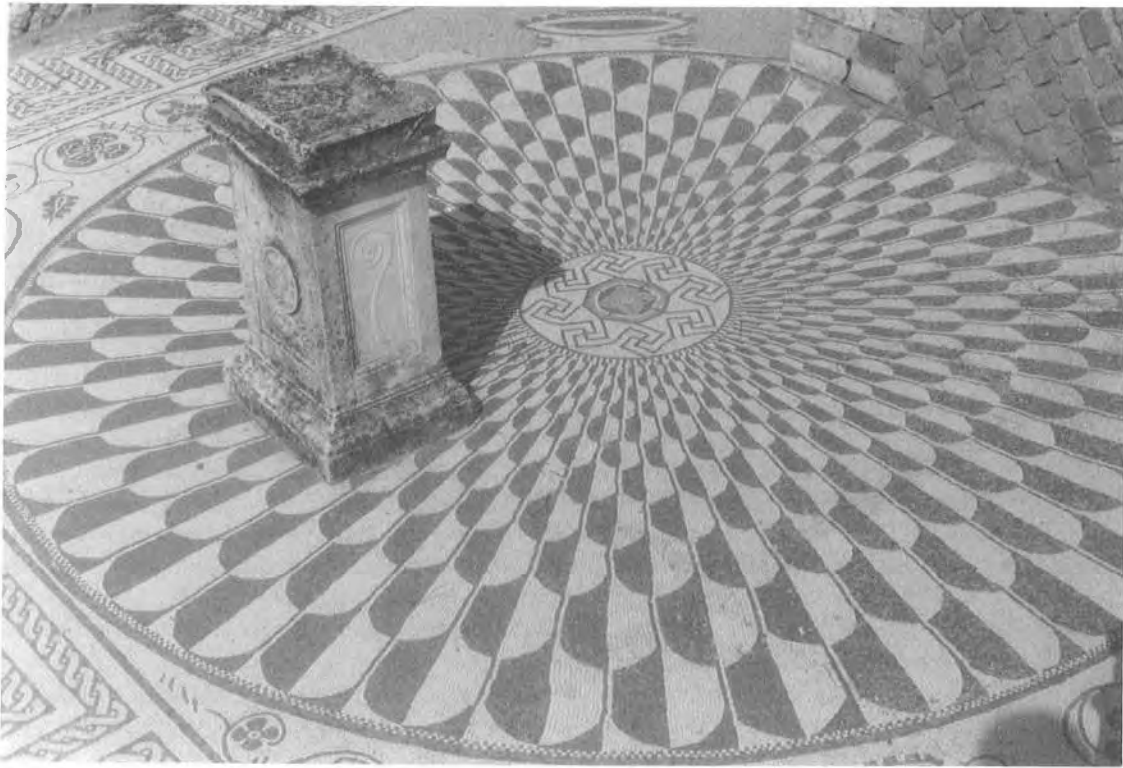


Fig.3. Villa of the Volusii Saturnini, *lararium*, mosaic floor and marble altar showing *patera* and *lituus*.



Fig.4. Villa of the Volusii Saturnini, *lararium*, view of the N and E walls showing reproductions of the inscriptions of the consuls of A.D. 3 and 56 affixed to the shelf along the E wall (figs. 5-6).

decker 1988: 76). What is more, artistic memorials of this sort were normally found in the open public areas of the house — the atrium, *tablinum*, or vestibule — not, as here, tucked away at the back of a portico in the more private sector. That location, though it perhaps owes something to the positioning of *sacella* off the porticoes behind temple buildings and the headquarters of professional associations (so Neudecker 1988: 83), is in a domestic context entirely appropriate for the seat of household worship (cf. Boyce 1937: 105).

The House of the Menander at Pompeii affords an instructive parallel. Nestled into a corner exedra at the back of the peristyle, beneath a small arched recess, four small, roughly worked portrait busts (*imagines*) and a seated statuette of a *lar* made of wood or wax were displayed against a backdrop of old-fashioned Second Style wall-paintings (possibly preserved *pietatis causa*). Set in front of the recess was a small rectangular masonry altar, evidently destined to receive offerings to the busts displayed or stored above (Maiuri 1933: 98-106; cf. Flower 1996: 42-43). This was not the *lararium* proper of the house, which took the form of a small tempietto built into a corner of the atrium (Maiuri 1933: 33-36), but rather a subsidiary shrine devoted to a commemorative cult of the dead. It thus serves a similar function to that of the so-called *lararium* at the villa of the Volusii in providing a formal architectural setting, at the heart of the house, for cultivating the memory of ancestors. The discovery of honorific inscriptions in the villa of the Volusii, however, marks an unprecedentedly conspicuous blurring of the line separating the traditionally distinct conventions of household worship and personal commemoration. In order to trace the genesis of this new form, we may usefully follow W. Eck in identifying two related developments in senatorial self-representation during the early Empire that help to explain the increasingly important symbolic function country houses came to acquire during the 1st c. A.D. (Eck 1984: 140-45).

First, the imperial monopoly in many forms of display at Rome created what Eck nicely calls 'an equality of non-representation' in certain areas — notably in that most conspicuous arena of Republican aristocratic competition: public building (Eck 1984: 141-42). With the traditional showcase of the city largely reserved for the imperial family, those inclined to pursue this particular style of self-promotion were henceforth obliged to parade their generosity outside Rome, in the smaller towns of Italy and the provinces. Inasmuch as the potential audience for such munificence was greatly reduced in size and significance at these less populous centers, by so much (we must suppose) the attractiveness of focusing one's resources on private building and thus of targeting a narrower group of socially estimable peers was magnified. The sort of select audience who could be counted upon to visit a villa such as that of the Volusii in the regular course of their fashionable *peregrinatio* might be shown the seat of domestic worship and would be suitably impressed. At the same time, the sort of inspirational effect formerly exercised upon family members by the waxen masks of ancestors displayed in the atrium (Sall., *Jurg.* 4.5-6; Flower 1996: 46, 221) might now be evoked more discretely under the guise of the traditional cult of the household gods. This blending of private and public forms of familial commemoration reflects the remarkable synthesis of function that the household shrine of the Volusii seems to have served in the family villa.

Second, a proliferation on the public stage of personal honorific monuments voted by the senate (we note the 9 statues awarded to L. Saturninus, the consul of A.D. 3; fig. 5) led to a devaluation of the distinctive quality of any single monument (Eck 1984: 145; cf. Orlandi 1995). The dramatic upsurge in officially authorized commemoration that came with monarchy marked a departure from Republican practice, when the impulse to public display sprang mainly from private ambition: statues awarded by the *senatus populusque Romanus* (invariably from the time of Augustus with the emperor's approval) are characteristic of the early Empire; during the Republic they are the exception that proves the rule (Wallace-Hadrill 1990: 161-66). This was one of the ways in which an imperial ethos that inhibited individual self-promotion — not only in the public sphere (Gros and Sauron 1988) but also, eventually, in the semi-private

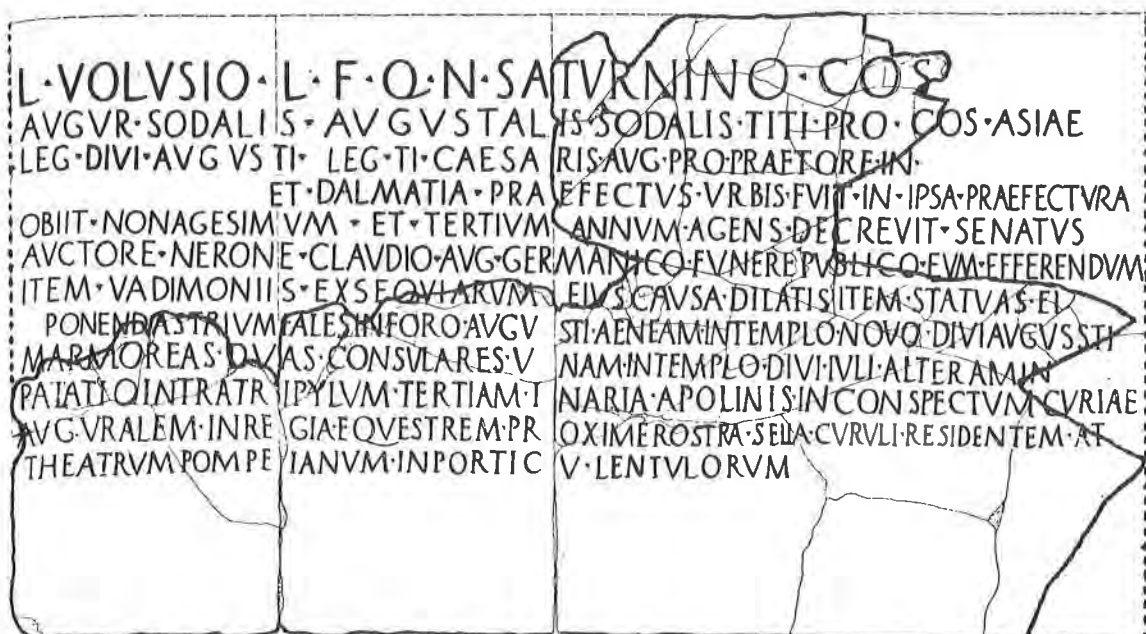


Fig. 5. AE 1972, 174 (L. Volusius l.f. Saturninus, cos. A.D. 3) and 175 (Q. Volusius L.f. Saturninus, cos. A.D. 56), from the *lararium* of the villa of the Volusii (after *Autostrade* X.8 (agosto 1968), 10, with J. Reynolds, *JRS* 61 [1971] 143 and Eck 1972: 463-77).



Fig. 6. Inscription of Q. Volusius L.f. Saturninus, cos. A.D. 56, from the *lararium* of the villa of the Volusii (AE 1972, 175, after *Autostrade* X.8 (agosto 1968) 10).

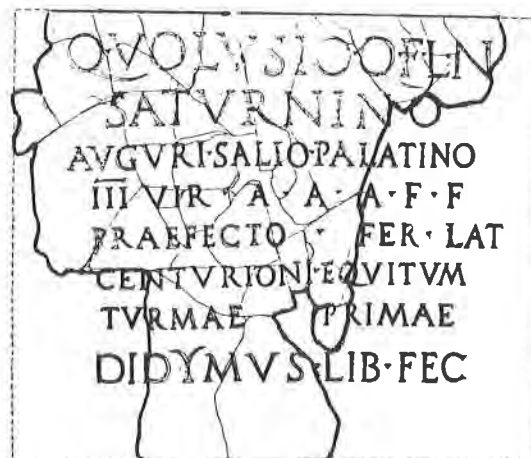


Fig. 7. Inscription of Q. Volusius Q.f. Saturninus, cos. A.D. 92, from near the *lararium* of the villa of the Volusii (AE 1972, 176, after *Autostrade* X.8 (agosto 1968) 12, with J. Reynolds, *JRS* 61 (1971) 144 and Eck 1972: 477-84).

realm of funerary expression as well (Hesberg-Zanker 1987b, esp. 12-16) — subtly but effectively undermined the traditional aristocratic ideology of personal and familial commemoration.

This combination of suppression and saturation helps to explain why, during the early Empire, traditionally public forms of commemoration started to invade the private sphere, and why honorific inscriptions began to be set up in private residences. The imperial monopoly in public display at the capital necessitated a change of venue and hence of audience for various forms of self-expression, and with the change of setting came a corresponding shift in emphasis. Since the number of persons brought before any particular monument was now effectively

reduced to the circle of a man's acquaintances, the value of these personal memorials for the purposes of self-advertisement was diminished; but their commemorative value for that more intimate group of friends and relatives was enhanced by their proximity to the tangible symbols of accomplishment. Most of the honorific inscriptions found in private homes were set up by grateful dependents to their living patrons: one of the texts discovered near the *lararium* of the Volusii, for example, was dedicated by a freedman to Quintus, the consul of A.D. 92, at an earlier stage of his career (fig. 7; cf. Eck 1972: 477-82). Inscriptions such as that for Lucius, the consul of A.D. 3, recording the full course of a career (in this case, only the consular career), on the other hand, were normally erected posthumously and thus belong to an entirely different category. These texts were not designed in the first instance to gratify a living ego but to establish a record of the past and to define its relationship with the present. Whereas the former are primarily synchronic in their effect, the latter are decidedly diachronic. During the Republic inscriptions setting forth a completed *cursus honorum* were almost exclusively limited to a single medium: funerary monuments. Even under the Empire, when the practice of listing all the offices held by an honorand became more common, documents of the sort inscribed for Lucius are normally found in sepulchral or other public honorific contexts (Eck 1984: 149-52). The discovery of such a text in a private residence, though perfectly in line with contemporary trends in public self-representation, is apparently without parallel.

In short, while no single feature of the so-called *lararium* of the Volusii is unprecedented, the ensemble presents a peculiar blend of elements drawn from the private realm of domestic religion, the public sphere of honorific commemoration, and the semi-public world of funerary expression. It is as if the atrium museum, where the images of noble ancestors were traditionally displayed as emblems of status and stimuli to emulation, has been moved to the private center of religious worship focused on the "house", in that ambivalent sense common to Latin and English, embracing both the physical structure and the family residing within. Centrally situated in one of the conventional locations for a *lararium* (off a portico at the back of the house), the family shrine of the Volusii is axially aligned with the atrium and is thus both visually and symbolically connected to it. Household and house here are linked in a manner designed to perpetuate the memory of both.

We do not know where the consular Volusii Saturnini of the early Empire are buried, but it is not unlikely that a monumental tomb was located somewhere within the territory of the vast agricultural villa complex to which the family owed some, at least, of its remarkable prosperity and at which such great attention was devoted to honoring the memory of those who had helped it thrive. It is a small but significant irony of history that the fullest record of the family's public service happens to come from the innermost sanctum of their private residence. If we did not know where the inscription of L. Saturninus had been found, we would naturally assign it to his final resting place, or perhaps to a public honorific monument; never would we imagine it to have been displayed at his country house. If the arguments advanced in the preceding pages are sound, however, it may not seem out of place to wonder how many similar texts, commemorative in character and thus regularly attributed to the world of the dead, might not have originated instead in domestic settings where the honorands had enjoyed the better part of life (cf. Eck 1984: 156 nn. 37-38). The villa of the Volusii in any case stands as an eloquent witness to the proposition that a man's country house, and not his tomb, might serve as his most enduring monument.

Rutgers University, New Jersey

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